

Post Visit Activities & Resources

It is hoped discussion and further exploration of issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers will continue following the momentum gained from the visit to the Immigration Museum.

As such we suggest that at the conclusion of the program, if time permits, students revisit the galleries and read the panel next to the Cuc Lam's story in the Getting In Gallery. These are 'Debating immigration – Debating Refuge' and 'Seeking refuge – The Tampa Crisis'

Three significant events; Tampa, Children Overboard and the SIEV X disaster may be useful for further investigation. As such, a brief background and a resource list to aid further study are provided.

Brief Background

Tampa

The Tampa is a Norwegian freighter and in August 2001, while in international waters between Indonesia and Australia, rescued 433 asylum seekers, mostly from Afghanistan and Iran. The ship made its way towards Christmas Island, the nearest land and port, but was turned back by the Australian Government who refused to allow the ships human cargo of asylum seekers to disembark to Australian territory.

After a stand off, eventually an agreement was reached so that Nauru and New Zealand processed the asylum seekers. In September of the same year the Australian Government introduced the Migration Amendment Bill to the 1958 Migration Act which excised Christmas, Ashmore, Cartier and Cocos (Keeling) Islands from the Australian migration zone. This meant that any unlawful non citizen (asylum seeker) attempting to enter Australia via one of these islands, could not do so.

Thus began what was known as 'The Pacific Solution' and many observers believe that the result of the 2001 Federal election in November was decided on this issue and the related issue of the 'children overboard'.

Resources

Australian Parliament Library www.aph.gov.au, and http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/SP/asylum_seekers.htm

Asia Today – a resource of the Asia Society

www.asiasource.org/news/at_mp_02.cfm?newsid=83339

with links to articles about: Tampa's asylum seekers: Australia must fulfil its international obligations; Australian Government position on MV Tampa refugees; Statement on 'Illegal' Boat Arrivals

Rural Australians for Refugees www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org

Peter Mares, *Borderline: Australia's Treatment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Wake of Tampa*, UNSW Press, 2003



David Marr and Marian Wilkinson, *Dark Victory*, Allen & Unwin, 2003 SIEV X

On 18 October, 2001, a wooden fishing boat departed the Indonesian port of Bandar Lampung with 421 passengers, all of whom were asylum seekers. It was dangerously overcrowded. At 3pm the next day the boat sank in international waters between Indonesia and Australia but inside the Australian aerial border protection zone. Approximately 146 children, 142 women and 65 men died. Controversy followed about whether the Australian Navy knew the ship was there and was sinking and could have rescued it but chose not to. A number of articles were written and debates and inquiries in parliament took place. The evidence has not been conclusive partly because the government refused to allow certain naval personnel to attend inquiries. As a result suspicion about what the government knew has not eased. This tragedy and controversy became known as the SIEV X (Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel X).

Resources

SIEVX.com archives primary and secondary source material related to the SIEVX Affair and Australia's People Smuggling Disruption Programme, <http://sievx.com>

SievX National Memorial Project www.sievxmemorial.com

Untold Tragedy: The story of the SievX (video) by Steve Biddulph.

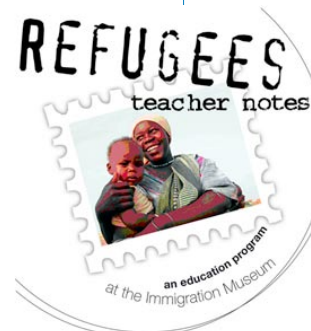
Children Overboard

On 6 October, 2001 an Australian navy boat intercepted and later boarded a boat carrying 233 asylum seekers. This event occurred in the middle of a Federal election campaign. The next day the Minister of Immigration, Philip Ruddock, announced that children from the boat had been deliberately thrown into the water by their parents to force the Australian government to rescue and accept them. The Prime Minister, John Howard, publicly attacked the asylum seekers, saying that Australia did not want the type of people who would throw their own children overboard. Anti asylum seeker/refugee sentiment within the community became strong. It was only after the Howard Government was returned to office that it became clear that the 'evidence' the story was based on was not true and the government knew it at the time.

Resources

Parliament of Australia www.aph.gov.au

Go into Search Query with title 'Children overboard incident' to find relevant parliamentary Hansard



General source material on issues pertaining to refugees and asylum seekers

www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

www.unhcr.org

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees web sites outlines news, programs, statistics and contains basic background information on aspects of immigration.

www.immi.gov.au/facts/index.htm

Provides Humanitarian program statistics

www.hri.ca/

Human rights issues are explored and links to human rights organisations provided.

www.amnesty.org.au

Amnesty International provides information about human rights abuses and issues relating to refugees,

www.crr.unsw.edu.au/index.html

Contains information about refugee rights and refugee law, policy and service provision.

www.baxternews.com.au

An online newsletter written by Baxter detainees.

