

**PRESS KIT**

# CHASING ASYLUM

# THE FILM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE.

## ONE LINE

*Chasing Asylum* exposes the real impact of Australia's offshore detention policies through the personal accounts of people seeking asylum and whistleblowers who tried to work within the system.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*Chasing Asylum* exposes the real impact of Australia's offshore detention policies and explores how 'The Lucky Country' became a country where leaders choose detention over compassion and governments deprive the desperate of their basic human rights.

The film features never before seen footage from inside Australia's offshore detention camps, revealing the personal impact of sending those in search of a safe home to languish in limbo.

*Chasing Asylum* explores the mental, physical and fiscal consequences of Australia's decision to lock away families in unsanitary conditions hidden from media scrutiny, destroying their lives under the pretext of saving them.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

*Chasing Asylum* exposes the real impact of Australia's offshore detention policies and explores how 'The Lucky Country' became a country where leaders choose detention over compassion and governments deprive the desperate of their basic human rights.

The film puts a human face to the government's offshore detention policies by presenting the raw personal stories of people seeking asylum sent to languish in indefinite detention on Manus Island and Nauru.

With unprecedented material from Australia's offshore detention camps on Manus and Nauru where no press, journalists or cameras are allowed, *Chasing Asylum* features never before seen footage of the appalling living conditions for detainees and brings together the faces and the voices of those impacted, but deliberately locked out of, the debate on Australian border protection.

Hear directly from asylum seekers about the inhumane, dangerous and hopeless conditions they endure daily in desolate detention centres. Meet the men and women who hope and dream of giving their children a safe future.

The film includes moving insights from those the Australian government wishes to silence – those who have worked on Manus Island and Nauru including security guards, social workers and interpreters whose shocking accounts of daily life in the detention centres underscore the gravity of Australia's policies, including the decision to keep children in indefinite detention – the only country in the world to do so.

*Chasing Asylum* also offers a bridge to understanding: why people leave their homes, risk everything, pay people smugglers, and endure unimaginable hardships in search of a safer life. At the same time it takes a good, hard look at how Australia shapes up against other nations dealing with displaced people and scrutinises the investment the government has chosen to make in detention ahead of sanctuary, spotlighting the billions of dollars spent on detaining asylum seekers and the hefty price tag of sending them to third world nations.

Australia is a democratic nation with a proud history of welcoming refugees, yet we have become a country that indefinitely locks away men, women and children in unsanitary conditions away from media scrutiny. Something has gone terribly wrong. *Chasing Asylum* seeks to explore what that something might be, and to show that it's never right to destroy lives, even under the pretext of saving them.

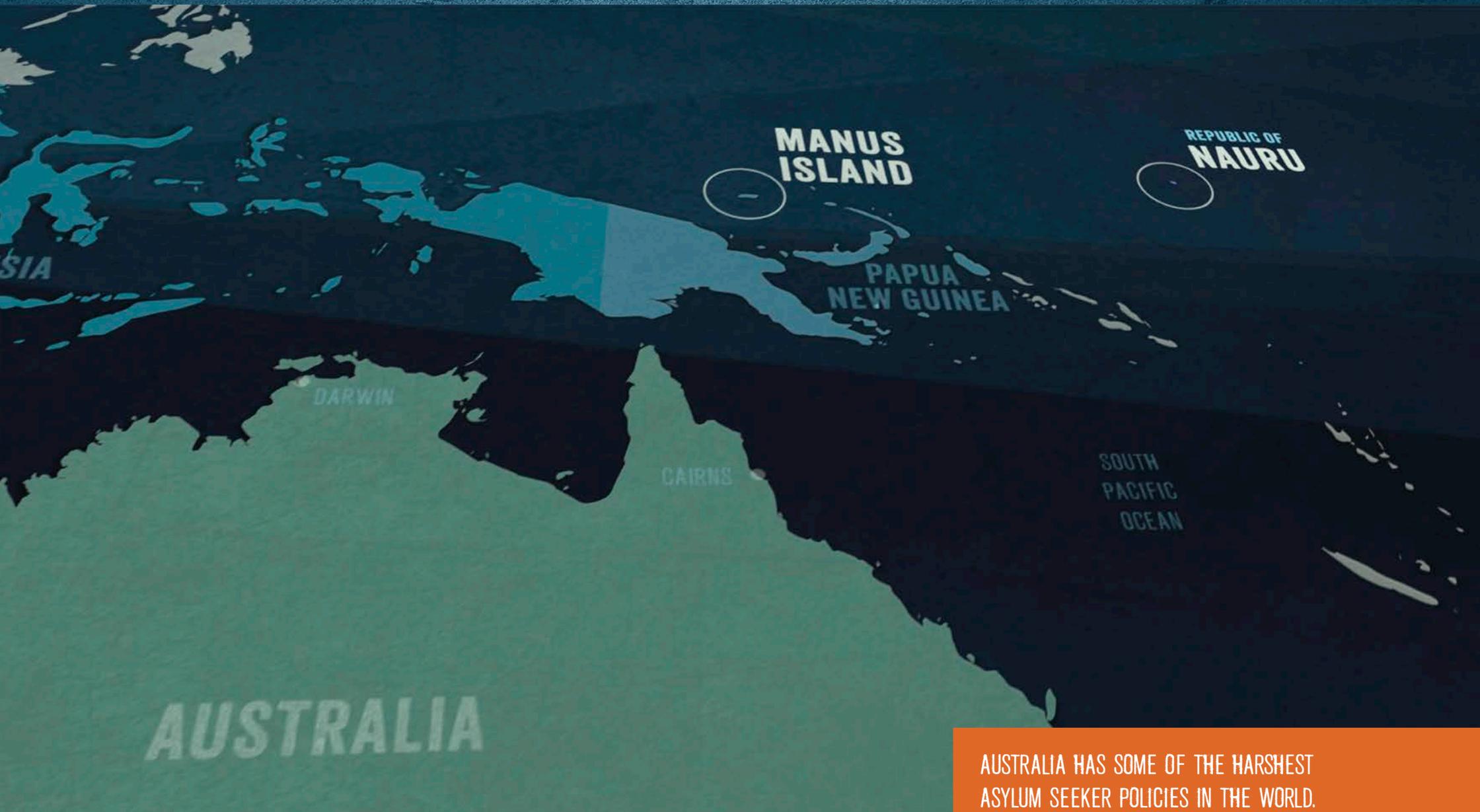
**Appearing in the film** alongside asylum seekers who have spent time in detention on Nauru and Manus Island and a number of former workers from inside the system who have participated exclusively in the film and spoken out for the first time, are author and journalist David Marr, human rights lawyer, David Manne, journalist Michael Bachelard and former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, in one of his final interviews.

## TECHNICAL INFO

PRODUCTION YEAR	2016
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Australia
DURATION	96 minutes
SHOT ON	Digital
SCREEN RATIO	16:9
FORMAT	DCP
SOUND FORMAT	5.1 SURROUND SOUND & STEREO



AUSTRALIA SPENDS \$1.2 BILLION EACH YEAR  
RUNNING THE DETENTION CENTRES.  
THAT'S \$500,000 PER ASYLUM SEEKER, PER YEAR.



AUSTRALIA

MANUS ISLAND

REPUBLIC OF NAURU

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

DARWIN

CAIRNS

SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

AUSTRALIA HAS SOME OF THE HARSHTEST ASYLUM SEEKER POLICIES IN THE WORLD.

# BACKGROUND TO THE FILM

When *Chasing Asylum* director, Eva Orner relocated to the United States in 2004 she never anticipated The Pacific Solution and offshore processing would still be policy in 2016.

***“Watching from afar I felt a growing sense of horror. As an Australian I was shocked that this was how our government had decided to treat desperate people. I watched with sadness as the hard line policies continued.”***

“I cheered in New York when the Howard Government was defeated, Kevin Rudd was elected and offshore detention centres were closed. Then I reeled in horror when they were reopened several years later, by the same administration!”

“As xenophobia in Australia increased, I saw elections being won over border protection issues as fear and panic replaced compassion and humanity.”

***In 2014, riots and murder occurred in Australian detention camps on the remote islands of Nauru and Manus and the UN accused Australia of breaking more than 150 resolutions of the Refugee Convention. At this point, Eva felt compelled to act.***

No stranger to voicing protest through film, she drew on her experience producing the Academy Award winning *Taxi to the Dark Side*.

“At the height of the Bush Administration the Rule of Law and The Geneva Convention were discarded and the United States Administration was actively involved in sanctioned torture. Working with documentarian Alex Gibney we started the film *Taxi to the Dark Side* to protest and to record a very dark time in American history.”

As well as an Academy Award, *Taxi to the Dark Side* went on to win an Emmy and a Peabody for Best Documentary Feature. It has screened around the world at film festivals, theatrically and on television and is part of the curriculum at American military academies.

***“I felt the same kind of documentary approach was needed here in Australia. The government and the country must be held to account in a high profile, public way. Their harmful policies do not reflect the way a civilized democracy such as Australia should operate.”***

Eva began work immediately on financing *Chasing Asylum*.

“I decided to raise the budget of the film privately as I felt an urgency to make it. I raised a little under 10% of the budget through crowd funding and the rest of the budget was financed independently. I was inspired and overwhelmed by the generosity and compassion of almost one thousand people who donated as part of the crowd fund and a number of individuals and foundations who contributed. It made me believe that there are many Australians who believe our policies are wrong.”

Within just three months, Eva had raised most of the budget and she arrived back in Australia in August 2014 and commenced production immediately.

**“ THE ARGUMENT IS THAT WE’VE GOT A RIGHT TO PUT REFUGEES THROUGH HELL AND THEIR CHILDREN THROUGH HELL BECAUSE IT WILL STOP PEOPLE DYING. BETTER THAT THEY BE MASHED UP IN NAURU AND MANUS ISLAND THAN DIE AT SEA. ”**

David Marr, author and journalist

“ THE MAIN THING YOU’RE DOING FOR PEOPLE ON NAURU IS KEEPING THEM ALIVE, ASKING THEM NOT TO HARM THEMSELVES, ASKING THEM NOT TO KILL THEMSELVES. ” Former Nauru social worker



“ I’M 28 YEARS OLD. I KNOW THAT I HAVE TO STAY HERE FOR A LONG TIME. NO ANSWERS FOR ME... AND I HAVE TO FORGET MY DREAMS HERE. ” Anonymous detainee, Nauru.

# INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR/PRODUCER, EVA ORNER

An Academy Award winning producer, Eva Orner's moral compass was set early.

"From a very young age I was aware that bad things happen to good people."

As she grew up, cognisant of the struggles and hardships endured by her migrant parents as they made a new life in Australia, Eva's strong sense of justice matured and evolved.

"Like 27 per cent of the population, I am first generation Australian. My Jewish parents were born in 1937 in Poland. My family did not fare well in the Holocaust – only one grandparent and less than a handful of distant cousins survived, along with my young parents."

***"What I learnt growing up in the shadow of genocide is that when something is wrong you must speak up and demand change."***

While Australia's record on human rights continues to sink to new lows as governments on both sides of the political divide doggedly refuse to treat the world's most desperate with even a shred of dignity, Eva felt unable to stand by in silence.

"Living in the USA for much of the past decade, I watched with increasing sadness as the Australia I know and love was dragged into a climate of fear by successive governments determined to convince us of the dangers of boat people."

"A concerted 15-year campaign has turned compassion into fear and has taken Australia from a nation that welcomed tens of thousands of refugees and boat people from war-torn Vietnam in the 1970s to a society where recoiling from the desperate is considered more acceptable than opening our arms to their plight."

***"What I hope is that Chasing Asylum informs and engages Australians to think more openly about the individual experiences of displaced people seeking a safer life."***

"There's a sense of fatigue in Australia when it comes to hearing about people seeking asylum, and there's a lot of misinformation and ignorance out there. I hope audiences who spend 96 minutes seeing this film – particularly the footage of life in the detention centres, which the government has tried to hide from the public – come out with a new perspective on the issue."

## MAKING CHASING ASYLUM

In recording the incredible individual stories that feature throughout *Chasing Asylum*, director Eva Orner travelled through Iran, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Indonesia to record the personal experiences of those impacted by Australia's offshore detention policies.

Among its many perspectives, the film features a moving interview with the parents of deceased asylum seeker, Reza Barati.

"They were incredibly kind and lovely people. It was just heartbreaking listening to their story of finding out their son had died seeking a safer life in a faraway place. When they were told he had been killed, they were given no real explanation of what had happened."

Similarly, the stories shared with Eva by Hazara asylum seekers stuck in Cisarua, Indonesia underline the way government determination to obstruct those seeking asylum makes life terribly challenging for families.

***They are caught between danger and a door that's been closed.***

"As the film highlights, Australian policies have directly contributed to high numbers – around 10,000 – of asylum seekers and refugees who are stranded in limbo Indonesia, where they can't work, and are not allowed to send their children to school."

"Their predicament is that it's too dangerous to return home, they are not welcome in Indonesia and Australia won't consider them for refugee status."

***"We have to help people who suffer as a direct result of conflicts Australia takes part in. We are part of coalition forces in Afghanistan and Syria – how can we turn people fleeing these war zones away?"***

## NEW LAWS, NEW CHALLENGES

The making of *Chasing Asylum* became more urgent, yet more dangerous, when half way through production the Australian government passed the Australian Border Force Act, which made it a crime, punishable by two years imprisonment, to speak out about conditions in offshore detention camps.

***“In many ways this just increased the urgency I felt about making the film,” says Eva. “The average Australian doesn’t really know what’s going on. They can’t see it and they’re not allowed to see it.”***

“The film shines a spotlight on the forgotten people who have no voice, but whose lives are being irrevocably impacted by the government’s hard line approach.”

## ABSENT VOICES

Eva is quick to stress that *Chasing Asylum* is a bipartisan documentary film.

“It’s not about attacking Labor or attacking Liberal. Both the major parties are complicit on this issue.”

***Eva approached former and current Australian Prime Ministers John Howard, Kevin Rudd, Julia Gillard, Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull and Immigration and Border Protection Ministers Scott Morrison and Peter Dutton.***

None agreed to be interviewed for the film.

“The only former Prime Minister who agreed to be interviewed was the late Malcolm Fraser, in one of his last interviews.”



Photo by Iqbal Ahmad Oruzgani

## COUNTING THE COST

*Chasing Asylum* spotlights the staggering amounts of public money spent to keep people in inhumane conditions on offshore detention centres, in trying to send them back to the danger they fled and in relocating them to third world countries.

***“How can the average taxpayer not feel aghast that the government spends \$500,000 per person per year to live in a mouldy tent with the risk of abuse from security guards?”***

“Security companies and contractors are making a lot of money out of detaining people in limbo for more than 1000 days in some cases. It’s just wrong.”

**“ WE WILL DECIDE WHO COMES TO THIS COUNTRY, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THEY COME. ”**

John Howard, 2001

**“ TO ASYLUM SEEKERS WHO ARE CONTEMPLATING RISKING A VOYAGE AT SEA... DON’T RISK IT. DON’T GIVE YOUR MONEY TO A PEOPLE SMUGGLER BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT BE BETTER OFF. ”**

Julia Gillard, 2012

**“ I MAKE ABSOLUTELY NO APOLOGY WHATSOEVER FOR TAKING A HARD LINE ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA. ”**

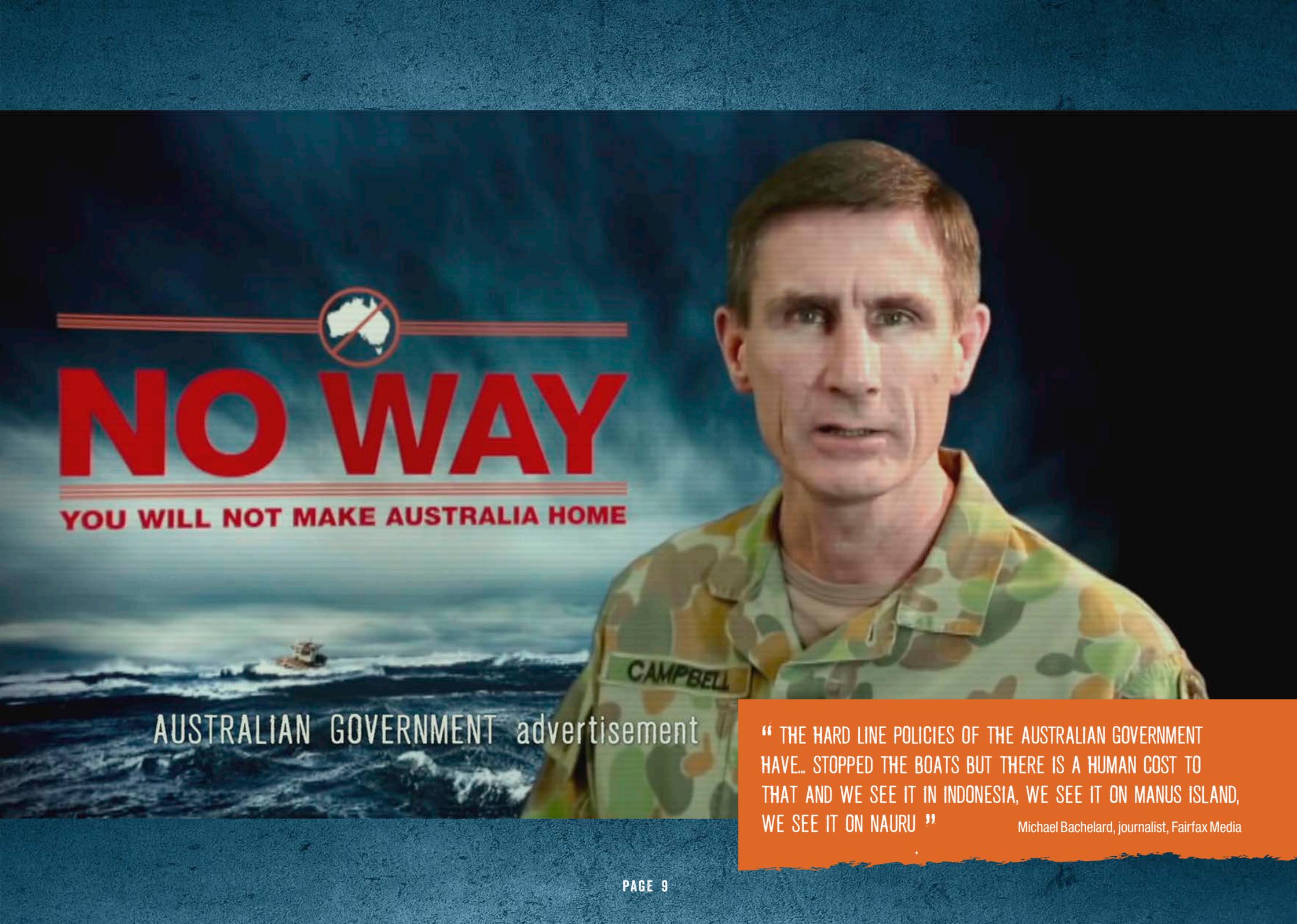
Kevin Rudd, 2009

**“ WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE ELECTED US TO DO WAS TO STOP THE BOATS. THIS IS A NATIONAL EMERGENCY. ”**

Tony Abbott, 2013

**“ WE RECOGNISE THAT OUR BORDER PROTECTION POLICY IS TOUGH. WE RECOGNISE MANY WOULD SEE IT AS HARSH. ”**

Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, 2015



  
**NO WAY**  
YOU WILL NOT MAKE AUSTRALIA HOME

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT advertisement

“ THE HARD LINE POLICIES OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAVE... STOPPED THE BOATS BUT THERE IS A HUMAN COST TO THAT AND WE SEE IT IN INDONESIA, WE SEE IT ON MANUS ISLAND, WE SEE IT ON NAURU ”

Michael Bachelard, journalist, Fairfax Media



“ SLOUCHED, BROKEN MEN, SO BORED AND WITH NO FUTURE. THAT’S WHAT THE FACES ON MANUS ISLAND LOOK LIKE. ”

Manus Island safety and security officer, Martin Appleby

# PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

*Chasing Asylum* presents the moving personal stories of those whose lives have been shaped by Australia's border protection policies.

## ***Meet Hazara refugee, Asad, stuck in limbo in Indonesia***

"My family is in...an insecure province in Afghanistan called Ghazni Province. As a husband, as a father, as a son, I have a responsibility to save them, to put them in a safe place."

## ***Meet former Nauru detention centre support worker, Mark***

"A wide range of people were hired... 18 years olds, university students, retirees, and the only thing we had in common was none of us had experience working with refugees."

"The whole concept of indefinite detention is that there's no progress. Under the Refugee Convention they have every right to come here and ask for protection...at least to have their stories heard."



## ***Meet the Iranian mother of an asylum seeker who died in Brisbane from blood poisoning contracted on Manus Island***

"The voice on the telephone was breaking up. They say Hamid's foot is in pain. They said he was in a coma. He was brain dead. They said we should let them remove the life support. I said 'No, I swear to God, don't kill my son. Do whatever you can to save my child.'"

"They said they had done whatever they could. I said thank you very much. Then I told them to donate his organs, his heart, his eyes and his arms."

## ***Meet former Nauru Detention Centre Director, Greg***

"You go from looking after people to saying if you come here, we're going to make it worse for you than if you'd stayed where you came from."

"I found it difficult to work in a portfolio and a job where our job was to implement a deterrent strategy and we knew that doing so would mean people would be damaged."

## ***Meet Tahira, the Afghan mother whose husband went missing at sea trying to reach Australia by boat***

"My husband had left from Pakistan to Indonesia. He was heading towards Australia...When I heard that the ship has disappeared I tried searching the net, I sent emails to the different agencies. My children...I have not told them that their dad is missing."

## ***Meet former Manus Island safety and security officer, Martin.***

"One of the worst accommodation [on Manus Island] was a former World War II hut made of tin, with a concrete floor. It contained 122 double bunks. Manus Island is tropical and these guys were housed in a tin shed. It was disgusting. The odour was disgusting. I just couldn't believe what I was looking at."

# KEY CREW AND SUPPORTERS

## DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

EVA ORNER

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

ROBERT CONNOLLY  
STEVEN AND LANI CASTAN  
NED MONTARELLO  
ROGER SAVAGE  
LAINI LIBERMAN AND BEN ROZENES  
SHANA LEVINE

## CO PRODUCER/EDITOR

ANNABELLE JOHNSON

## CONSULTANT EDITOR

JILL BILCOCK

## CINEMATOGRAPHERS

TIM DEAGLE  
MARIN JOHNSON  
MICHAEL DOWNEY  
KHADIM DAI  
COREY BAUDINETTE

## COMPOSER

CORNEL WILCZEK

## OPENING TITLE AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

PLUS FILMS  
DONNA McCRUM  
ANDY CANNY  
LANA DAUBERMANN  
GREG COOPER

## PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS

RYAN COOPER FAMILY FOUNDATION  
THE HUMANITY FOUNDATION  
ENGLISH FAMILY FOUNDATION  
FOURESS FOUNDATION  
BARDAS FOUNDATION  
NORDIA FOUNDATION  
SUZI CARP  
THEODOTUS JOHN SUMNER CHARITABLE TRUST  
CH & CE WADDELL TRUST  
GIVE NOW  
ELLI BARDAS  
RIVER CAPITAL FOUNDATION  
NELLIE CASTAN  
KAREN LOBLAY  
LJ RYAN  
MIM BARTLETT  
RICCI SWART  
IMAGING WORKSHOPS INTERNATIONAL P/L  
DR PAN TSIRGIOTI

## PARTNERS AND INVESTORS

**SOUND FIRM**  
SYDNEY - MELBOURNE - BEIJING



# KEY CREATIVES

## EVA ORNER

**Director/Producer**

Academy and Emmy Award winner Eva Orner is an Australian filmmaker recently back home after ten years based in Los Angeles and New York. Eva's latest film is the feature documentary, *Chasing Asylum*, which she directed and produced. The film tackles Australia's treatment of refugees and asylum seekers over the past 15 years, focusing on offshore detention. Eva has also written a book *Chasing Asylum* about the making of the film, published by Harper Collins. The film was shot in Australia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Lebanon, Iran and Afghanistan and the film and book will be released in Australia in April 2016.

Also to be released in 2016 is *Out Of Iraq*, co-directed and produced by Eva with LA based production company World of Wonder. The film follows a gay Iraqi couple over a decade as they try to stay alive and together and seek asylum in the US.

Prior to *Chasing Asylum* Eva directed and produced the feature documentary *The Network*, set behind the scenes at the largest and most successful television network in one of the most unstable and dangerous places on earth, Afghanistan. Eva wrote, directed and produced *The Network*. It was released theatrically in the US in October 2013 by FilmBuff, is available on Netflix US and UK, premiered on US television on Pivot and in Australia on SBS in 2014. It has screened and won awards at festivals around the world including SXSW and Sheffield and has sold extensively for television.

Eva's US producing credits include the feature documentaries *Taxi To The Dark Side*, *Gonzo: The Life And Work Of Dr Hunter S Thompson*, *The Human Behavior Experiments* and *Herbie Hancock's Possibilities*. Her work has screened at festivals including Cannes, Sundance, Tribeca and Sydney, has been released theatrically and sold to VOD and television across the globe.

In Australia Eva has won an AFI, Logie and Human Rights Award for her work.

Not a lot fazes Eva. She is simply obsessed with great stories and finding them an audience.



## ROBERT CONNOLLY

**Executive Producer**

Robert Connolly is the writer and director of the feature films *The Bank* (2001), *Three Dollars* (2005), *Balibo* (2009), *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* (2012), *Paper Planes* (2014) and the 4 part TV series *Barracuda* (2016).

Robert also produced the award-winning films *The Boys* (1998), *Romulus, My Father* (2007) and *The Turning* (2013). In 2014, Robert joined forces with Endemol Australia to produce the mini-series *Gallipoli*.

Robert's distribution company, CinemaPlus has released *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* (with Matchbox Pictures), *The Turning* (with Madman Entertainment), *The Boy Castaways*, *Closed Circuit* (in partnership with Pick Up Truck Pictures and Backlot Studios), *Spear*, the first feature by Bangarra Dance Theatre's Stephen Page and *Force of Destiny* by Australian veteran director Paul Cox.

In 2016, CinemaPlus will release *Chasing Asylum*, a documentary by Academy Award winner Eva Orner.



## ANNABELLE JOHNSON

**Co-producer / Editor**

Annabelle's screen credits include *The Turning*, *Nowhere Boys*, *Upper Middle Bogan* and *Little Lunch*, for which she received a 2015 AACTA nomination for Best Editing in Television. Her documentary work includes episodes of the ABC Arts series *Anatomy* as well as *Class Act!* for ABC's *Compass* series. Annabelle works across a range of genres and has received Australian Screen Editors Guild nominations for her editing in short film, comedy and documentary.



THERE ARE CURRENTLY MORE THAN 60 MILLION DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, THE HIGHEST NUMBER SINCE WORLD WAR TWO. THE ESTIMATED WAIT IN A REFUGEE CAMP IS OVER A LIFETIME. IN 2013 AUSTRALIA CUT ITS REFUGEE INTAKE FROM 20,000 TO 13,500.



Photo by Joel van Houdt



“ WHY? WHY DO WE KEEP CHILDREN IN THESE CONDITIONS? ” Former interpreter on Nauru and Manus Island.

“ WE REQUESTED 4 MINUTE SHOWERS BUT THE SECURITY GUARD SAID... IF I COULD SEE YOUR KID'S NAKED BODY. ”

Extract from the Moss Report:  
Conditions and Circumstances at  
Australia's Regional Processing Centre in Nauru

AUSTRALIA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD  
TO DETAIN CHILDREN IN INDEFINITE DETENTION.



CAMBODIA IS ONE OF SOUTH EAST ASIA'S POOREST NATIONS, WHERE THE AVERAGE WAGE IS LESS THAN \$100 A MONTH. AUSTRALIA HAS PAID THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT A\$55 MILLION TO TAKE PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM OFF OUR HANDS.

TO DATE, FIVE REFUGEES HAVE ELECTED TO GO TO CAMBODIA.

“ THE CAMBODIA DEAL SHOWS THAT AUSTRALIA CAN SPEND ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY DOING PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING TO ASYLUM SEEKERS AND THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE WILL ACCEPT IT BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT THEM HERE. ”

Michael Bachelard. Journalist, Fairfax Media

# TIMELINE OF RECENT EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
August 2001	The Howard government refuses permission for the Norwegian freighter MV Tampa, carrying 438 rescued refugees to enter Australian waters. The Tampa crisis prompted a new border protection regime in Australia – the ‘Pacific solution’ whereby asylum claims would be processed offshore.
September 2001	Nauru offshore detention opens as part of the Howard government’s Pacific solution.
October 2001	Manus Island offshore detention centre opens as part of the Howard government’s Pacific solution.
February 2008	Manus Island and Nauru offshore detention centres closed to fulfil an election promise by the Rudd government.
24 June 2010	Julie Gillard becomes leader of the Labor party and Australia’s first female Prime Minister.
14 August 2012	Nauru detention centre re-opens.
21 November 2012	First asylum seekers sent to the re-opened Manus Island detention centre.
16 May 2013	Australian mainland excised from the migration zone enabling Australia to send arrived asylum seekers offshore for processing. Australia cuts its refugee intake from 20,000 to 13,500.
26 June 2013	Kevin Rudd returned as Prime Minister.
19 July 2013	‘PNG Solution’ agreement signed by Australian and PNG Prime Ministers ensuring asylum seekers who arrive by boat go straight to Manus Island and never have the chance to settle in Australia.
7 September 2013	Tony Abbott becomes Prime Minister. Scott Morrison is named Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.
23 December 2013	Australia allegedly turns the first boat back to Indonesia, making the ‘turn back the boats’ policy official.
5 January 2014	Australian Navy begins using lifeboats as a way to return asylum seekers back to Indonesia.
3 February 2014	Australian Human Rights Commission opens a National Enquiry into Children in Immigration Detention.
17 February 2014	Asylum seeker protests lead to a riot on Manus Island. One asylum seeker, Reza Barati, is killed in the violence.
24 February 2014	Transfield Services takes over the running of the Manus Island detention centre under a contract believed to be worth \$1.1 billion.
11 June 2014	ALP confirms its support for offshore detention for people seeking asylum.

DATE	EVENT
19 August 2014	Scott Morrison announces that children who arrived in detention before 19 July 2013 will be removed from the centres.
5 September 2014	Asylum seeker Hamid Kehazaei dies after a 24 hour delay for urgent medical attention
26 September 2014	Cambodia Agreement signed. Those at the Nauru detention centre found to be refugees who volunteer will be sent to Cambodia for resettlement. The Australian government will pay costs and give a further \$40 million in aid to Cambodia.
28 November 2014	United Nations Committee Against Torture openly criticises the Australian government’s handling of asylum seekers.
17 December 2014	Scott Morrison opens a resettlement facility on Manus Island to provide support for refugees to move into the PNG community.
21 December 2014	Peter Dutton appointed new Minister for Immigration and Border Protection.
12 February 2015	Australian Human Rights Commission report into the effects on children of long-term detention finds one in three children suffer from significant psychological distress.
6 March 2015	UN Special Rapporteur on Torture condemns Australia for failing to provide adequate detention conditions and the practice of keeping children in detention.
18 March 2015	Leading Australian health professionals from 15 organisations call for the release of children in detention.
24 March 2015	Moss Review reveals sexual abuse on Nauru.
13 May 2015	Four refugees prepare to fly to Cambodia for resettlement. On the same day, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand refuelled and pushed out to sea a flotilla of boats containing 7000 mostly Rohingya and Bangladeshi men, women and children seeking asylum.
20 May 2015	Rohingya and Bangladeshi refugees offered temporary shelter by Indonesia and Malaysia.
September 2015	German Chancellor, Angela Merkel announces Germany will open its doors to Syrian refugees fleeing violence and unrest in their home nation. By the end of 2015 almost 1 million refugees had been welcomed into the country.
September 2015	Tens of thousands of Australians attend pro-refugee rallies around the country urging the government to welcome refugees from the conflict in Syria.
9 September 2015	Prime Minister Abbott announces Australia will resettle an additional 12000 Syrian refugees.
14 September 2015	Malcolm Turnbull becomes Prime Minister.
February 2016	National president of the AMA calls prolonged detention “state-sanctioned child abuse”. Doctors at Lady Cilento hospital in Brisbane refuse to discharge a baby to detention on Nauru as it does not constitute “a suitable home environment”.



“ ALL OF IT IS REALLY HARMFUL FOR CHILDREN,  
BUT IT'S CONSIDERED THE PRICE THAT'S REQUIRED  
TO STOP THE BOATS. ”

Dr Peter Young, former detention centre director of mental health services



“ THEY CAME UP TO OUR ROOM AND SHOT AT OUR DOOR. THEY BROKE THE WINDOW. THEY WERE TELLING US TO GET OUT. ”

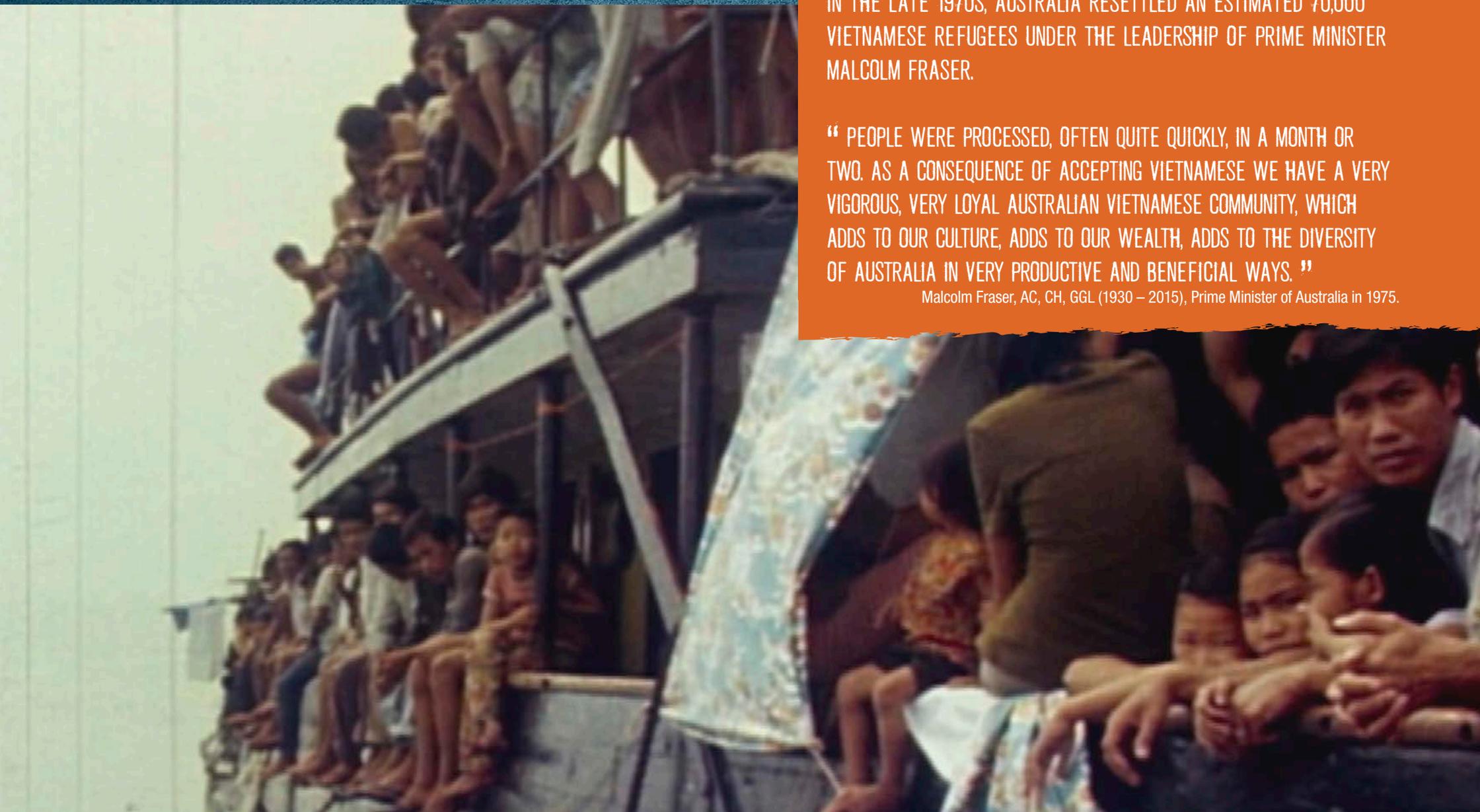
Detainee on Manus Island at the time of the 2015 riot.

“ WHEN REZA BARATI DIED [IN THE RIOT] HIS SKULL WAS SHATTERED, HE WAS BEATEN WITH STICKS AND KICKED IN THE HEAD BY MORE THAN TEN OFFICERS... AUSTRALIANS AND LOCALS. ”

Journalist, ABC TV 7.30

# FACTS AND STATS

- The number of displaced people in the world – around 60 million – is more than twice Australia’s entire population of 24 million.
- It costs almost \$500,000 a year to keep a single person in an offshore detention centre.
- No one who has arrived by boat has ever been found to be a direct threat to Australia’s national security.
- 90 per cent of people who come by boat are found to be refugees escaping war and persecution.
- As of 31 March 2015, there were 989 men detained in the Manus Island detention centre, where they are subjected to dangerous and inhumane conditions that led to two deaths in 2014 alone.
- Hamid Kehazaei, an Iranian asylum seeker detained in the Manus Island centre, died in September 2014 after contracting septicaemia through a cut on his foot. A lack of medical resources and bureaucratic delays meant that Kehazaei was unable to be treated in time.
- The operational cost of maintaining the Manus Island detention centre is over \$600 million per annum – vastly more expensive than it would be to process asylum seekers in Australia.
- Detaining a single asylum seeker on Nauru for one year costs more than \$400,000.
- The independent Moss Report released in 2015 revealed reports of rape within the Nauru detention centre, and numerous “reported and unreported allegations of sexual and other physical assault” of both minors and adults.
- Current Australian government policy includes the resettlement of people found to be refugees on Nauru on temporary protection visas, before they are offered permanent resettlement in Cambodia. No asylum seekers sent to Nauru who are found to be refugees will ever be settled in Australia.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission 2014 enquiry found that Australia’s transfer of children to Nauru is in breach of several articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- As at July 2015, Australia was ranked 50th in the world for refugee hosting, admitting just 0.25 per cent of the global total.
- Compared to our population size (per 1000 inhabitants) Australia is ranked 67th. Compared to our national wealth per billion GDP we are ranked 84th
- The UNHCR estimates there are more than 10,000 asylum seekers stranded in Indonesia due to Australia’s border protection policies.



IN THE LATE 1970S, AUSTRALIA RESETTLED AN ESTIMATED 70,000 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRIME MINISTER MALCOLM FRASER.

“ PEOPLE WERE PROCESSED, OFTEN QUITE QUICKLY, IN A MONTH OR TWO. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ACCEPTING VIETNAMESE WE HAVE A VERY VIGOROUS, VERY LOYAL AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY, WHICH ADDS TO OUR CULTURE, ADDS TO OUR WEALTH, ADDS TO THE DIVERSITY OF AUSTRALIA IN VERY PRODUCTIVE AND BENEFICIAL WAYS. ”

Malcolm Fraser, AC, CH, GGL (1930 – 2015), Prime Minister of Australia in 1975.



Photo by Daniel Wieckmann

# PUBLICITY AND CONTACTS



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