



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

**Migration Legislation Amendment
(The Bali Process) Bill 2012**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 27 June 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Wednesday, 27 June 2012
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Questioner
Speaker Katter, Bob, MP

Source House
Proof No
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Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (19:12): I have been listening to speeches in parliament for 39 years and today was probably one of the better exercises in hypocrisy that I have heard.

Mr Neville: How would you know?

Mr KATTER: Do not provoke me. I do not think that would be a really good idea, Paul Neville. The situation to me seems very simple. If you can get on a boat and get into Australia, then you would be a fool not to have a go. The people who are coming in are coming from countries where incomes may be \$3,000. It seems to me the average income for the people who are coming in is about \$3,000 a year. Here, even if you do not work, you are on \$35,000 a year. It is a pretty good call.

Mr Neville: Come on!

Mr KATTER: The bloke in front of me here, the member for wherever he comes from—Bundaberg—says, 'Come on!' Are you disagreeing, my friend? Are you disagreeing that a person comes here because he will get a better standard of living? Oh, you are not—so stop interrupting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke): The member for Hinkler is not helping the situation. The member for Kennedy has the call.

Mr KATTER: On the figures that have been presented to me by both sides of this parliament, it would appear that if these people are processed—here or overseas—two-thirds of them will end up getting into Australia. I suspect the figure is a lot higher than that, but I will accept the figure that I have been given of two-thirds. So if you have a shot you have a two in three chance of getting in to what these people would probably consider a paradise. So why not have a go? They have a go and a lot of them die because no-one has told them that a lot of people die attempting to get here.

I voted against the Malaysian solution the first time and I think really it was for political reasons that I made the decision. I am ashamed to say that, but that may have been an element most certainly in my thinking at the time. But if you know that when you get on that boat you are going to be at the back of a queue of 250,000 people in Malaysia then there is not much point in getting on that boat. That is what we are talking about and voting on here. I will also be voting for the legislation being put forward by the opposition because I think it is better to have two horses in the race than one horse in the race. But it does not seem to me that too many other people in this place are too interested in that. They have got their idea and they are not going to change it, they are not going to compromise. From my experience, on both sides of the House I have been presented with that approach. I think that the Malaysian solution may not stay afloat in the longer term and we do have to go to another solution, but I just cannot but see that if you know that you get on the boat and you have two-thirds of a chance of getting into a country that they would consider to be paradise then it is worthwhile having a go.

My forebears and the forebears of most people in this House—all mine were here in 1870 or earlier—came out here and were prepared to live on a dirt floor in a galvanised iron shanty in the goldmining towns of Australia, as did the forebears of almost all those who were here before the Second World War. But these people are not coming here to live on a dirt floor in a galvanised iron shanty; none of them are going to do that. They are going to live in what is considered by most people on Earth to be fairly attractive circumstances. Unless you can demonstrate clearly to these people that if you get on the boat you will not get in here then this will continue and get considerably worse.

I have spoken in this place a thousand times that you live in a country that is empty. I represent an area that could support a population of 60 or 70 million people. The electorate of Kennedy has got the water and the land resources. This issue will bring it home to the rest of the world. As the United Nations lady from the Indian subcontinent said, 'You will take these people because you are a country that can.' I think that they are very

ominous words for the people of Australia. The more attention that is brought to this issue, the worse our country is going to be. (*Time expired*)