



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Asylum Seekers**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 20 November 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Wednesday, 20 November 2013	<b>Source</b> House
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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Kelly, Craig, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

**Mr CRAIG KELLY** (Hughes) (15:58): It is very interesting to follow the member for Kingsford Smith, who obviously remains in complete denial about the facts in relation to this matter. Our history records that Labor's policy of undoing the Howard government's policies on asylum seekers and border protection is the most monumental policy failure we have seen in our nation's history. But the real disaster, the real failure, was not so much on their tragically flawed original decision when they came to office in late 2007. The real disaster was the nondecisions of the Labor and Greens government when they continued on with those policies, failing to admit their mistakes when the disastrous consequences of those policies were obvious to every Australian. We know what they were: 800 boats, 50,000 arrivals, a budget blow-out of close to \$12 billion. But most tragic of all was the deaths of 1,100 people that the policies of the people sitting on my right caused.

The previous Labor government turned the seas around Christmas Island into a graveyard, a graveyard of over 1,000 souls. This mob should hang their heads in shame. You should hang your heads in shame, you should be cringing with embarrassment and you should let us get on with cleaning up the mess that you created.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The member for Hughes will resume his seat. I was about to bring his attention to the use of the word 'you'—and it has been happening on both sides during this MPI. 'You' refers to the occupant of the chair. In this case, it is not me that you are referring to. So I once again remind the House that the use of the word 'you' is a reflection on the chair and is grossly disorderly.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker. What the opposition fails to understand is that we are currently in a military operation to stop the boats and, most of all, to stop the deaths at sea. No government would give a running commentary on operational details of the fight against the Taliban. Likewise, we should not be giving operational details of our fight against the people smugglers. We have seen the Greens and Labor become the best friends of the people smuggler. But with the change of government we—

**Mr Fitzgibbon:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I find that extremely offensive, and I ask the member to withdraw.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Hughes would assist the chamber if he would withdraw that reflection.

**Mr CRAIG KELLY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, to assist the chamber I withdraw. We need look no further than the words of Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, a lieutenant general in our armed services. He has made very clear the importance of the way information is released on this matter. He has made it very clear as to why these protocols are in place. He has said it would give advantage to the people smugglers if we were to release this information; it will provide people smugglers with material that may be used to manipulate or confuse their customers; it would undermine our regional relationships necessary to deal with this problem; and, most of all, it would endanger our people.

That is why the government are taking the steps that we are taking. But, most of all, we need to remember, when it comes to secrecy, the policies of the previous Labor government. Remember that, when they were releasing people on bridging visas out into the suburbs of our cities, our state police commissioners specifically asked and wanted to know where those people were being released, and the previous Labor government refused to provide that information. They refused to provide information to our state police commissioners about where people were being released into our society, because they wanted to look after their safety.