

WHOSE VOICES?

1. "Getting on an unseaworthy and overcrowded boat to leave your home forever is not a decision that anyone takes lightly. You have to reach a high level of desperation. People can die on the open sea. These people know that. But they are forced to choose between no hope and a glimmer of hope – which would you chose?" - [Renee Marner, Advocate](#)

2. "The most humanitarian, the most decent, the most compassionate thing you can do is stop these boats because hundreds, we think about 1200 in fact, drowned at sea during the flourishing of the people smuggling trade under the former government... Australia will do absolutely nothing that gives any encouragement to anyone to think that they can get on a boat, that they can work with people smugglers to start a new life. I'm sorry. If you want to start a new life, you come through the front door, not through the back door." - [Tony Abbott, former Prime Minister of Australia](#)

3. "Australia signed up to the Convention Against Torture 30 years ago. We did so because as a nation we agreed with the important minimum standards of treatment it guaranteed. Yet here we are 30 years on, knowingly breaching those standards and causing serious damage to our reputation." - [Daniel Webb, Human Rights Law Centre director of legal advocacy](#)

4. "This is a demeaning debate, it's a miserable one. It also shows that the politicians who participated in this debate have contempt for all of us, for the majority of the Australian people. They believe that despite all the evidence to the contrary, that if they appeal to the fearful and mean sides of our nature, they will win support." - [Malcolm Fraser, Former Prime Minister of Australia](#)

5. "If you would contemplate the boat, if you would take the boat, then the argument boils down to this. Our insistence that they not get on boats may seem compassionate, but it is also the sanctimony of the safe and the rich. We are basically telling desperate people to flee in a way that makes us feel comfortable." - [Sarah Joseph, Director, Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, Monash University](#)

6. "Then they tell in my great country of Australia, this is a country that tortures me worse than any regime in Iran or Afghanistan or Iraq because they torture me in the inside. They torture me because they make me feel like I am nothing, that I'm invisible, that I do not exist. From nothing to zero, I go." - [Kon Karapanagiotidis, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre](#)

7. "I think all asylum seekers should be detained for processing at a centrally located processing centre or centres in Canberra or wherever the relevant Federal bureaucracy is located. This/these facilities need to be secure but not behind barbed wire. There are many less intimidating and stigmatizing options to barbed wire fences. A central location and high profile is important for both symbolic and practical reasons of access." - [Douglas Evans, retired academic and blog commentator](#)