



Senator Amanda Vanstone

MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

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Burke's Misinformation on SIEV X Children a Disgrace

17 October 2006

"Tony Burke has stooped to a new low in his campaign to convince Labor to scrap Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs)," Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Amanda Vanstone, said today.

"Not only is Mr Burke's policy backflip putting the lives of asylum seekers at risk, he's using misinformation to win support for his case.

"Just raising the possibility of a Labor Government scrapping TPVs will encourage people smugglers to recruit passengers and risk dangerous journeys to Australia in leaky boats and through treacherous seas.

"TPVs, a key plank of Australia's border protection measures, have been effective in slowing to a trickle the flow of unauthorised boat arrivals.

"Our border protection policies have helped saved lives by deterring people smugglers.

"That's allowed Australia to ensure more of its refugee places are taken by those already assessed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as being in most desperate need of resettlement.

"But Mr Burke doesn't seem to care. His policy position will encourage people smugglers and their potential clients to put their lives at risk.

"To push his argument along, he claimed yesterday that 146 children were on the SIEV X "...children who overwhelmingly had dads living in Australia...." (See attached transcript extract)

"Yet the report on the SIEV X, from a committee on which the Government had only three of 8 members, found that there were 70 children on the vessel. (ref 8.1, page 195, Senate Select Committee Report on a Certain Maritime Incident, October 2002)

"Mr Burke's misinformation and politicking demeans the tragedy for those who lost their lives and will only serve to compound the grief for survivors and family and friends.

"Mr Burke should stick to the facts. If he can't succeed in his ambition of convincing the ALP to change policy on TPVs with the truth – that should tell him something.

"Under the Coalition, our policy is for orderly migration in cooperation with the UNHCR.

"Under Tony Burke, Labor policy would be to encourage people smugglers to come on down."

See: [Transcript Extract](#) (20KB PDF file)

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