

Rally in support of refugees



August 2010

Friday 13th August will see people who support rights for refugees marching from the State Library at 5pm.

The march has been organised one week before the Federal Election to oppose all political parties and candidates aiming to win votes by attacking refugees and saying they will 'stop the boats' and lock up asylum seekers.

Refugees are some of the most abused and vulnerable people on our planet. They have a legal right to enter our country to seek asylum from violence and persecution.

Locking up asylum seekers reflects poorly on our nation and its respect for human rights. And it often leads to the appalling situation where people who have had to endure intolerable circumstances in the country they have fled develop serious mental illness as a result of time spent in an Australian detention centre.

National mental health expert Professor Patrick McGorry used his acceptance speech as Australian of the Year to indicate the effect of detention on refugees:

"Detention centres...you could almost describe them as factories for producing mental illness and mental disorder...it's an absolute disaster."

Union members have an interest in rejecting the scare-mongering and mistreatment of asylum seekers. It should matter to all unionists that we ensure that those who are trying to win votes by promising to 'get hard on boat people' instead focus their energy on telling us how they intend to invest in the things that could make a **real difference** to the lives of workers. Things like education, health, welfare, infrastructure, equal pay – the list goes on.

And at the ASU, we know that many of our members are former refugees themselves or the children of refugees, who came to Australia to get away from wars or violent persecution by their government. And that there are thousands of ASU members around Australia whose work is directly supporting asylum seekers who are trying to start a new life.

The members of the SACS Metro Delegates Committee encourage you to attend this rally and show that you believe this election should be about real issues, not scape goating!