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Church and political leaders have condemned the two major political parties for silencing the critics of their tough stance on asylum seekers

Howard, Beazley lashed over race

Marian Wilkinson and David Marr

Australia's most senior religious leaders have joined leading academics and prominent Liberal and Labor figures to condemn the refugee policies of both parties as xenophobic and inhumane.

Church leaders described the stand on refugees taken at this election by both the Prime Minister, John Howard, and Opposition Leader, Kim Beazley, as "amoral", "brutalising" and "a failure". Anglican, Catholic, Uniting, Baptist and Jewish leaders have expressed deep concern that the national psyche and Australia's international reputation are being damaged.

"I don't remember a time when there has been an election with such a clear moral issue but treated by the major parties with such clear amoral electioneering," said the Rev Tim Costello, president of the Baptist Union. He warned that both sides were playing to "darker, more populist instincts".

"The unwillingness to hose down xenophobia actively plays into it," the head of the Uniting Church, the Rev James Haire, warned, "and that's what's happened in these elections. I don't know any issue, certainly in recent times, where the churches have been so offside with both political positions."

Their warnings were supported by John Yu, Chancellor of the University of NSW and former head of the Children's Hospital, who last night spoke on ABC Radio of the "heartless, xenophobic extremes" used to exclude the asylum seekers fleeing Afghanistan and Iraq. He told of his experiences as a



MALCOLM FRASER
Former prime minister
"When policy falls heavily on the poor, the destitute, those seeking to flee hunger, brutality and tyranny, then that policy is wrong. It is inhumane. The destitute have been made pawns in a harsh political contest."



DR JOHN YU
Chancellor, University of NSW
"...most strikingly, this loss of communal caring is seen in the lack of humanity and the heartless, xenophobic extremes used to exclude those seeking to escape... the hopelessness of Afghanistan and Iraq."



JOHN MENADUE
Former head of the Immigration Department and Prime Minister's Department
"This is not strong leadership, to attack vulnerable, outcast, weak people. It is cowardice, it is not courage and it is not strong leadership."



IAN GEORGE
Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide
"The bipartisan policy is... failing lamentably. It's destroying our international reputation, brutalising the Australian people's attitudes and making us a less compassionate people."



FRED CHANEY
Former Liberal minister
"What the political leadership in Australia is doing - and I say that across the board - it's not government or opposition. I think what both are doing is essentially appealing to the worst in our natures."



MARGARET REYNOLDS
Former Labor senator
"Obviously I would have preferred for Kim Beazley to have stuck to his original position rather than roll over. And that would be the view of many people in both the Labor and Liberal parties."



IAN MACPHEE
Former Liberal minister
"[Howard's] total lack of vision, history, geography and cultural sensitivity is evident to all who are capable of independent assessment. Howard is a throwback we must throw out."



JOHN HEWSON
Former Coalition leader
"Ironically, Howard... has never had a genuine passion for policy. He has, however, successfully manipulated prejudice to his personal political advantage. I guess, to many, that is what makes him a good politician."



JULIE BISHOP
Liberal Member for Curtin
"If another boat were to sink with hundreds of people, that would be unthinkable. We need a new approach... It is vital there is an agreement with Indonesia."



RICHARD WOOLCOTT
Diplomat and former secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
"We are witnessing in Australia a tragic recrudescence of those old barbarisms: racism, religious intolerance and jingoism."



NEVILLE WRAN
Former NSW premier
"The race card has been introduced into this election. It's a card and an introduction which we and our children will live to regret."



PETER CARNLEY
Anglican Primate
"...there will have to be a rethink because the number of island states around the Pacific that are prepared to take refugees is not infinite and it's going to run out unless we start placing them in the Antarctic."



TIM COSTELLO
President of the Baptist Union
"I don't remember a time when there has been an election with such a clear moral issue but treated by the major parties with such clear amoral electioneering... really we have had an election in a moral vacuum."



TOM UREN
Former Labor minister
"Both parties rejected the churches' position because of political expediency. It's a terribly sad outcome and will take generations to overcome."

two-year-old war refugee fleeing the Japanese Rape of Nanking in 1937 and arriving on a boat in Sydney with no papers. He was met by his uncle, who brought his university classmate Sir Earl Page, founder of the Country Party and one-time deputy

prime minister, who "carried me ashore in his arms, unchallenged and undocumented by customs and immigration".

"I tell this story to ask what will 'queue jumpers' or 'illegal' really mean when today's history is written in the future, distant

from the emotion and political distortions of the present."

Dr Yu is one of a growing number of prominent Australians to voice their dismay about the direction of the refugee debate.

The former Liberal leaders Malcolm Fraser and John

Hewson and ministers Fred Chaney and Ian Macphie have joined the Labor figures Paul Keating, Neville Wran, Tom Uren and Margaret Reynolds in expressing deep concern about the rising xenophobia in the debate.

Speaking at a Labor fundraiser last week, Mr Wran, the former NSW premier, warned: "The race card has been introduced into this election. It's a card and an introduction which we and our children will live to regret."

While Mr Wran avoided direct criticism of Mr Beazley, other

lifelong Labor supporters have not, such as the playwright David Williamson, who said he could not vote for Mr Beazley because of the refugee issue.

Mr Fraser was the first of the Liberals to criticise Mr Howard in the aftermath of the Tampa

crisis. "The destitute have been made pawns in a harsh political contest," he wrote in the *Herald* in mid-September. He accused Canberra of carrying out "policy without a conscience" and declared that Australia "will be carrying the burden of being a wealthy and a selfish country for some time to come".

Dr Hewson accused Mr Howard, his successor as leader of the Opposition, of tapping "latent racial prejudice in significant sections of the Australian community". He claimed Mr Howard had "successfully manipulated prejudice to his personal political advantage".

They were joined this week by Mr Macphie, who in a letter to *The Age* wrote: "Howard learnt nothing from his years in the Fraser cabinet when it handled in a bipartisan manner a massive challenge presented by asylum seekers."

Mr Chaney, another Fraser government minister, has accused both Mr Howard and Mr Beazley of "appealing to the worst in our natures". Speaking on the ABC, he said "in our attempt to show that we are very tough, I think we are failing the test of our own civilisation. The civilisation we're prepared to send troops overseas to defend."

John Menadue, Cavan Hogue and Richard Woolcott, all former Australian ambassadors to Asia, have also voiced their concerns. Mr Menadue, also a former head of the Immigration Department, condemned the "me-tooism" of Labor and the Coalition which he said "leaves me bitterly disappointed that our proud record is being besmirched by the political opportunism on refugees".
The Choice - Pages 7-9; Editorial and opinion - Page 14; Letters - Page 15

Lane Cove tunnel link grows two lanes and blows out \$265m

Joseph Kerr

The Lane Cove leg of Sydney's motorway ring-road has been dramatically expanded, lifting its cost by \$265 million and delaying completion by two years, the State Government revealed yesterday.

The environmental impact statement into the proposed tunnel link between the Gore Hill Freeway and the M2 revealed that it had grown from four to six lanes.

Previously due to begin taking traffic off Epping Road from 2004 and costing \$550 million, the \$2 toll road is now expected to open in 2006 at a cost of \$815 million.

Unveiling the EIS, the Minister for Transport, Carl Scully, said the 3.4-kilometre twin-tunnel would carry a toll, unlike the M5 East, because the Government could not afford to fund both from general revenue.

The road will be put out to private tender next year, if the Government keeps to schedule, with construction beginning in 2003.

Apart from the expected opening of the M5 East on December 9, recent moves in the Government's expanded roads agenda include an October close on tenders for the Cross City Tunnel and calls for tenders last week for the Western Sydney Orbital.

In a move that has been well-

ESTIMATED PEAK HOUR TRAVEL TIMES IN 2006

MORNING PEAK	NO TUNNEL	TUNNEL	SAVING
Macquarie Park to CBD	26min	18min	31%
Macquarie Park to Nth Sydney	20min	12min	40%
Macquarie Park to Cremorne	29min	14min	52%

EVENING PEAK	NO TUNNEL	TUNNEL	SAVING
CBD to Macquarie Park	35min	18min	49%
Nth Sydney to Macquarie Park	30min	13min	57%
Cremorne to Macquarie Park	41min	18min	56%



comed by residents, the Lane Cove tunnel will have a two-stack exhaust system, with the sites of the stacks to be finalised during EIS consultations.

But neither stack will have the filtration systems favoured by anti-pollution groups like the Residents Against Polluting Stacks, which have been campaigning against the unfiltered Turrella stack on the M5 East.

Mr Scully defended the decision not to include particle filters, calling them a "high-tech placebo that makes people feel good".

"In fact, our research shows that with the building of the tunnel and the two ventilation stacks, the air quality is better," he said, noting that cars emitted fewer pollutants when given a clean run rather than having to

stop constantly at lights. "The fuel is going to get cleaner, engines are going to be using fuel to drive their vehicle in a different way," Mr Scully said. "That means what comes out is going to be cleaner - you don't need a filter."

But the deputy chairwoman of the Lane Cove Tunnel Action Group, June Hefferan, said that such benefits would come only in her grandchildren's time, given the age of cars on the road now. The tunnel will reduce traffic on Epping Road and Mowbray Road West and allow for a seven-kilometre cycleway and improved bus services.

Submissions on the plan, which will be on public display until December 19, can be made to the Roads and Traffic Authority.

Pakistan moves to gag Taliban envoy who mentions the dead

Christopher Kremmer
Herald Correspondent
in Islamabad

Pakistan has moved to gag the Taliban's only voice outside Afghanistan, telling its envoy to stop criticising the United States in the media.

The Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Saleem Zaeef, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in Islamabad and told his almost daily press briefings contravened diplomatic protocol.

Islamabad invoked the "third country" rule, in which ambassadors are not supposed to attack other countries with diplomatic representation in the capital.

"The Afghan ambassador has been told not to use the Afghan Embassy premises in Islamabad to speak against any third country," a government spokesman, Noor Saghir Khan, said.

The only Taliban representative accredited as an ambassador, Mullah Zaeef has played a vital role in publicising civilian casualties from the US-led attacks on Afghanistan.

The Pakistan regime is concerned that his statements are inciting public anger towards the US and undermining Pakistan's support for the bombing campaign.

The move to gag the ambassador came on the eve of the de-



Mullah Zaeef... told not to speak

parture overseas of Pakistan's military ruler, Pervez Musharraf, and threats by Muslim groups to stage a massive anti-war rally on Friday.

General Musharraf left yesterday for talks with world leaders, including the French President, Jacques Chirac, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

His trip will climax with a reception by President Bush at the White House, preceded by an address to the United Nations special session on terrorism.

On the first leg of his trip,

President Musharraf arrived in Tehran for talks with the Iranian Vice-President, Mohammad Reza Aref. Pakistan and Iran are at odds over Pakistan's support for the US strikes on Afghanistan.

The Western leaders will give General Musharraf the red-carpet treatment despite tensions with Islamabad over plans to continue the bombing beyond the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

His trip is also aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of his military regime, seen as a crucial link in the war against terrorism.

The general is expected to use his trip to press for "zones of peace" inside Taliban-held areas where aid can be given to civilians facing starvation during the coming winter.

The plan has powerful opponents in Washington, which believes the Taliban will exploit any safe havens to preserve its fighting capabilities.

But Islamabad fears that public unease over the plight of civilians in a neighbouring Muslim country could explode, undermining its backing for the attacks.

General Musharraf's absence at a critical time has heightened these sensitivities and security is being enforced in the capital until his return on November 13. War on terrorism - Pages 10, 11

INSIDE

Millionaires battle for Ansett

Three of Australia's richest men were last night embroiled in a contest for control of Ansett, reviving the airline's chances of survival. Cardboard tycoon Richard Pratt has emerged as a possible partner for the staff syndicate, pitted against Solomon Lew and Lindsay Fox. **Page 3**

Rugby league chief Moffett quits

The NRL chief executive, David Moffett, resigned yesterday with a year left on his contract. Insiders say a key factor in his demise was the lack of confidence the 14 club heads had in him, claiming he did not have a "feel" for the game. **Pages 42, 44**

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News Flash: A gallery featuring the best pictures by Herald photographers.

WEATHER Details - Page 22

Today

Early shower, then fine
City 14°-20°
Liverpool 13°-21°
Richmond 12°-22°

Tomorrow

Rain developing, thunder possible.
City 15°-24°
NSW today Rain, isolated storms

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