



A Well-Founded  
*Fear*

A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



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This study guide to accompany *A Well-Founded Fear*, a documentary from November Films, has been written for middle and senior secondary students. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English, Geography, International Politics, Legal Studies, Media, Religion and Society, SOSE, VCE VET Community Services and curriculum projects discussing the issue of asylum seekers.

## About *A Well-Founded Fear*

*For five years the social justice agency I work for, the Edmund Rice Centre, has been tracking asylum seekers Australia rejects. Unless we know what has happened to them we'll never know if the right decision was made to send them back.*

– Phil Glendenning

**T**he 1951 Convention on Refugees imposes a major obligation on countries not to deport or expel people to countries where they face persecution or risk serious human rights violation.

Admittedly it is difficult for government authorities to assess whether someone is a legitimate refugee. People do not always escape their countries with documentation that proves who they say they are or supports their claims of persecution. *A Well-Founded Fear* shows that we cannot afford to get these decisions wrong.

*A Well Founded Fear* is about the Edmund Rice Centre's research into the fate of deported asylum seekers. The centre's director Phil Glendenning believes that if Australia doesn't monitor what happens to the people they deport, they won't know if they are making the right decisions. The documentary explores what motivates Glendenning to do what no one else in the world does as he makes contact with the asylum seekers Australia didn't want, the people that immigration officials didn't believe had a 'well-founded fear' of persecution. His work takes him to dangerous war-torn countries.

The documentary examines the legacy of John Howard's policy as Glendenning crosses the globe in search of the asylum seekers Australia detained,

rejected, and then deported. International law says people shouldn't be sent to unsafe locations but the stories of the deported asylum seekers that Australian immigration officials returned to Afghanistan, Syria and Iran suggest that this law was overlooked. Glendenning believes that the implications of these decisions need to be recorded and the Australian people need to hear about what has happened to those people who have failed to establish their status as refugees. Glendenning's intention is to bring back the stories and present them to the Government and the United Nations.

In Afghanistan, Glendenning meets a group of Hazara men who all spent time in detention on Nauru, the Pacific island Australia paid to detain asylum seekers offshore. When the Taliban was deposed from Government in late 2001, Australian authorities told them they were safe to return to their homeland. Glendenning learns of at least nine Afghan deportees who were killed when they were sent back. He also learns Australia has been deporting people who aren't Syrian to Syria on short term visas. When their visas run out they are forced into hiding. Equally disturbing is evidence that Australia has been knowingly using false passports to deport asylum seekers that fail to attain refugee status. At the end of his fact-finding mission it is evident that Glendenning is returning to Australia angry at the Australian Federal Government's decision to 'play around' with the truth of people's lives.

*A Well-Founded Fear* puts faces to names and numbers and in revealing the details of the deported asylum seekers lives encourages empathy and understanding. Like Glendenning, we are forced to question the policies, practices and attitudes that have put innocent people's lives in danger.

*'Unless we know what has happened to them we'll never know if the right decision was made to send them back.'*

Phil Glendenning



### Bentley Dean – Co-Director

Bentley Dean studied Philosophy and Politics at Sydney University and Film and Television at the Victorian College of the Arts. In 1997, he participated in the ABC's inaugural series of *Race Around the World*. Since then he has worked as a freelance cameraperson and director. In 2001, he began working for SBS TV's international current affairs program *Dateline*. In 2003, he filmed and co-directed (with Curtis Levy) *The President Versus David Hicks*. His feature-length film *The Siege* premiered at the Sydney film Festival in 2007.

### USING A WELL-FOUNDED FEAR IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers may select from the following information and activities to support students' viewing and close analysis of *A Well-Founded Fear*.

#### Before viewing *A Well-Founded Fear*

The following statement offers students an insight into the subject of *A Well-Founded Fear*.

*There are many reasons why people are forced to leave their homeland as refugees. Refugees are usually fleeing because of a well-founded fear of specific kinds of persecution related to their: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The persecution is usually a serious punishment or some significant disadvantage inflicted by a government or by individuals or a group that the government cannot or will not control. The people who make it to Australia end up in detention centres while their claims for*

### Key Creatives

#### Anne Delaney – Producer and Co-Director

Anne Delaney is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist. She has a First Class Honours Degree in History from the University of Sydney, and a Master of Arts Degree from the Australian Film Television and Radio School, where she specialized in documentary directing and producing. In 1996, she was a Fulbright Fellow at New York University where she undertook a course in video production. Delaney originally trained as a diplomat prior to accepting a position with ABC Radio National, where she worked as a producer and presenter for several years. She subsequently worked as a senior journalist for ABC Radio, ABC TV and SBS TV. Delaney has also worked as a senior adviser to the former Australian Minister for Human Services and Health, Dr Carmen Lawrence and as a consultant for a number of United Nations organizations and non-government agencies, including the World Bank, UNICEF and UNAIDS. Her documentary credits include *Suburb 4 Sale* (Anne Delaney and Lara Cole, 2006), *PAN* (2006), *The Shipping News* (2002), *Double Jeopardy* (2002), *Seeking Refuge* (2001), *Intellectually Disabled Parents* (2001), *Radio Roulette* (2000), *Safe Sex Fatigue* (2000), *The Lama of Greystanes* (1999), *No Mess* (Anne Delaney and Brett Evans, 1999), and *The Letter* (2000).

*'Refugees are usually fleeing because of a well-founded fear of specific kinds of persecution related to their: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.'*

Anne Delaney

asylum are processed. Like many countries that deport asylum seekers, the Australian government doesn't monitor what happens to the people they send back.

*This is a time in history when it's easy for the west to look inward, to look after its own, and to close its doors on people fleeing political discrimination, economic hardship, or religious persecution.*

– Anne Delaney

- Can you identify particular events and the actions of particular individuals and groups that have shaped contemporary western societies to adopt such an insular perspective?

Students may find it helpful to know the names of the participants in *A Well-Founded Fear*.

- Phil Glendenning
- Mubarek Nayef
- Salek
- Gholam Payador
- Wahab Majin
- Mohammed Hussain
- Mohammed Amin
- Abdul Azim Rajabi
- Mohammed Rizae
- Zhara

## Refugees and asylum seekers

A refugee is a person who:

*... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country ...*

– Article 1, The 1951 Convention  
Relating to the Status of Refugees

An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country of origin, has applied for recognition as a refugee in another country, and is awaiting a decision on their application.

- What do you know about Australia's response to asylum seekers?
- What do you want to know about Australia's response to asylum seekers?

## After viewing *A Well-Founded Fear*

*A Well-Founded Fear* begins with Phil Glendenning's claim, 'How could it be that we could allow this to happen and at the same time not imagine how we would feel if it was done to us. What were we afraid of?' The archival footage that follows exposes the injustices that asylum seekers have



faced once they reached Australian shores. Allow students to share their thoughts and feelings about the opening segment.

Allow students to share their personal impressions of the stories told by and about the returned asylum seekers in *A Well-Founded Fear*.

- Were you shocked by the deported asylum seekers' allegations about the circumstances of their detention and deportation?
- What are the central concerns of *A Well-Founded Fear*?
- Australia prides itself on being about a fair go. When does *A Well-Founded Fear* prove this view to be true? When does *A Well-Founded Fear* challenge this view?
- Do you think *A Well-Founded Fear* has the potential to influence government policy on deporting failed asylum seekers?

'In making *A Well-Founded Fear*, we wanted to create an accurate record of what we believe will turn out to be a particularly dark period in Australia's recent history.'

– Anne Delaney

- Do you think the filmmakers have achieved this aim?

## Close Analysis

### The Edmund Rice Centre

The Edmund Rice Centre is involved in a range of projects and activities across the four areas of its operation in research, community education, advocacy and networking. The Congregation of Christian Brothers guides the organization's work.



*The Edmund Rice Centre services the needs of refugees and asylum seekers by providing help and support, and by fostering and advancing their cause.*

The Edmund Rice Centre's objectives are to:

- Conduct and encourage research into the causes of poverty and inequity in society.
- Promote teaching that supports awareness, understanding and action in the areas of justice and community issues.
- Promote experiential learning activities through organized and reflective immersion programs in Australia and internationally.
- Encourage the development of skills in advocacy and social action.
- Facilitate liaison and networking opportunities amongst agencies involved in social justice and community education activities.

Visit <http://www.erc.org.au> to learn more about the organization.

The Edmund Rice Centre services the needs of refugees and asylum seekers by:

- Providing help and support for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Fostering and advancing the cause of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Promoting and furthering the congregation in its works on behalf of the needy and the disadvantaged.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of direct services to asylum seekers and refugees.
- Assisting persons who are experiencing financial disadvantage by reason of their circumstances.

*A Well-Founded Fear* promotes the Edmund Rice

Centre's research into the fate of failed asylum seekers who have been deported by the Australian Government into situations of danger. The results of this research conducted by the centre's director Phil Glendenning and his colleagues has been published in two reports: *Deported to Danger*. The first report summarizing the findings about deported asylum seekers generated publicity worldwide but was dismissed by the previous federal government on the basis the findings were unsubstantiated.

Information about the research and downloadable copies of the reports are available from the Edmund Rice Centre's website.

The Edmund Rice Centre is only able to achieve its work through the financial contribution of its supporters. Financial support is urgently needed for ongoing research.

- Who was Edmund Rice? What was his mission? In what sense is Glendenning's work continuing to fulfil Rice's mission? A detailed biography of Edmund Rice can be found on the Edmund Rice Centre's website.
- Organize a fundraising activity to support the work of the Edmund Rice Centre.
- You can become involved in the work of the Edmund Rice Centre. The Schools Network at the Centre aims to involve schools from around Australia in a discussion of social justice issues and an exchange of information on projects schools are undertaking to advance these issues.
- Invite a spokesperson from the Edmund Rice Centre in your state or territory to speak to the class.



## Phil Glendenning

*We wanted this film to be, in-part, a character study of a remarkable, committed Australian, as he travels the globe and gives volume to the silenced voices that are Australia's unwanted.* – Anne Delaney

Phil Glendenning is the director of the Edmund Rice Centre, a Sydney-based social justice organization that conducts research into the causes of poverty and inequity in Australia. He is also a co-founder and former national president of Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, and the author of the Australian Citizens' Statement on Native Title. More recently, he has been the catalyst behind the Let's Talk Project and the *Deported to Danger* reports. With a background in education, Third World development and political science, he is primarily involved in peace and reconciliation work – especially with youth – in Australia, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, Rwanda and Aboriginal Australia.

In awarding Glendenning an honorary doctorate in 2007, Professor Peter Sheehan AO, the National Vice-Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University, acknowledged that Glendenning had 'shaken the moral compass of Australian society' for his longstanding dedication to improving the lives of poor, Indigenous, politically dispossessed and suffering people both in Australia and worldwide.'

Other than Glendenning there is no one else in the world who regularly investigates what happens to rejected and deported asylum seekers.

Glendenning's work with deported asylum seekers is about justice. He wants those who have been deported to know, 'Your story counts' and 'We want to know your face and we want to know your name.' In meeting the deported asylum seekers, Phil extends the hospitality that Australia failed to show these people. He welcomes them in out of the cold, offers them tea and shows his compassion by examining their documents and listening to their stories. He walks with them.

- Make a list of adjectives that describe Phil Glendenning. Find an example to match each adjective. Some words you may like to use include: inspirational, charismatic, compassionate, passionate and committed.
- What drives Phil to do what he does?
- An advocate is a person who supports or speaks in favour of another. What does *A Well-Founded Fear* tell us about the work of an advocate?
- Phil's work with deported asylum seekers has caused him to be named as an activist. An activist is a person who uses vigorous campaigning to bring about social or political change. Find out more about Phil's role as an activist.
- What will be achieved by telling Phil's story?

*'How could it be that we could allow this to happen and at the same time not imagine how we would feel if it was done to us?'*

Phil Glendenning



## The asylum seekers

The following question and prompt could be used to explore the stories of the individuals featured in *A Well-Founded Fear*.

- What do these stories tell us about the human spirit?
- ‘The hopes and dreams of most asylum seekers are not so different from our own.’  
Use this statement to discuss the stories documented in *A Well-Founded Fear*.

### Rizae

Mohammed Rizae is Ishmaili, a pacifist Islamic sect persecuted by Islamic fundamentalists. Ishmailis cannot practise their faith and have no places of worship. Rizae’s grandfather refused to fight against Soviet-backed Communists in the civil war. He was publicly hanged in the bazaar for being a communist sympathizer. Rizae is also a Hazara, historically one of the most persecuted groups in Afghanistan. This made him a target of the Taliban and of the nomadic tribespeople the Kuchis.

When Rizae fled to Australia he ended up on Nauru. He did not trust the Pashtun translators who worked for the Australian federal government on Nauru because they were of the same ethnic background as the Taliban and the Kuchis. Rizae never told them he was Ishmaili. His application for asylum was rejected in 2001 because of inconsistencies in his country of origin information and because the Taliban were no longer in control. Rizae’s response to the judgement reveals his frustration and disappointment, ‘I do not believe and cannot see how they were able to adequately inform themselves. Those places where we live are not and never were secure.’

Rizae returned to Afghanistan in 2002. Within months Rizae was pursued by his old enemies. He was forced to flee to Pakistan. Rizae now moves

back and forth across the Pakistan and Afghanistan borders to stay safe.

- Use the following statements to generate a discussion of Rizae and his case for asylum. Ask students to draw on other statements and moments to explain their points of view.

*We were driven out of our homes. They killed eleven people and destroyed many homes. For years we’ve had feuds and my father fought them for a long time. Today, since my father is no longer here, they are looking for retribution against me.*

– Rizae

‘The Kuchis were very brutal. They’d evict people from their houses and say that the Hazaras should go to the graveyards.’

– Rizae

*We were told by the smugglers only to complain about the Taliban. We were told to say we were ordinary people and not involved in politics. They said that if we showed ourselves as political people we’d stay in the camps for a very long time.*

– Rizae

‘You have suffered a lot in your life. After all you’ve been through why are you not angry?’

– Phil

*I strongly believe that good will only come to those who are happy or who strive to be happy. The day that people stop trying to be happy in Afghanistan the world will be a sad day indeed.*

– Rizae

‘I will one day be in Sydney with you.’

– Rizae

*Rizae is Ishmaili ...  
Ishmailis cannot practise their faith and have no places of worship ...  
Rizae now moves back and forth across the Pakistan and Afghanistan borders to stay safe.*



## Mohammed Hussain

‘We turned our faces towards the defenders of humanity. And now we are grateful for the Taliban and loathe this man.’ – Mohammed Hussain

These words express Mohammed Hussain’s feelings about how he was treated by the Howard Government. He tells Phil, ‘We can’t complain about the Taliban because they were illiterate and crazy. But this was a politician and prime minister.’ When Mohammed Hussain’s application for asylum was rejected he was returned to Afghanistan. Knowing that his life was in danger he fled the country. His past political affiliations during the civil war have left him with many enemies. Now that he wants to move on he can’t live a peaceful life.

When Phil attempts to meet with Mohammed Hussain to verify the circumstances of his case, he learns that he has been apprehended. Phil decides to meet the eyewitnesses instead. They explain that they saw Mohammed Hussain being pushed into a car. There is nothing that Phil can do.

- Use the following statements to generate a discussion of Mohammed Hussain and his case for asylum. Ask students to draw on other statements and moments to explain their points of view.

‘And seeking refuge in Australia worsened my crime.’ – Mohammed Hussain

*I can’t live in Afghanistan because of problems with the Khalili faction, the Akbari faction and*

*Azim gave up his Islamic faith and married outside his tribal group, both crimes in the eyes of fundamentalists. ... his two daughters were killed in a grenade attack on their home...*

*the Taliban. I live in a place where there is a coal mine. And I work in the coal mine. Where there is a mountain, and no one else.*

– Mohammed Hussain

‘I’m left wondering if other returnees will suffer the same fate.’ – Phil

## Azim

Abdul Azim Rajabi is a Hazara whose family was connected to the previous Communist government. That alone made him a target of the Taliban. Azim gave up his Islamic faith and married outside his tribal group, both crimes in the eyes of fundamentalists. The Taliban came looking for Azim in early 2001. They captured his father demanding to know his whereabouts. Azim’s father refused to tell them anything. As punishment for protecting his son, Azim’s father was beaten with cables and electrical cords. Azim fled to Australia. His wife and family went into hiding in Iran. He arrived on Nauru in late 2001. Eighteen months later Azim was told that it was safe to return to Afghanistan. The Australian Government offered him the choice of \$2000 to return or to stay in detention indefinitely. Four months later his two daughters were killed in a grenade attack on their home just outside Kabul. He now lives in Pakistan with his remaining family.

Azim’s distress is obvious as he recounts his story to Phil. For Phil, Azim’s story causes him to reflect that it’s not just about ‘intellectually gathering data’ – it’s about human beings.

- Use the following statements to generate a discussion of Azim and his case for asylum. Ask students to draw on other statements and moments to explain their points of view.

*I got up and left everything, my life, my country. I consoled myself hoping that although separated from my family, at least I would find a way to keep myself and my family alive.* – Azim



*Zhara is an Afghan woman whose son Sher Muhammed fled to Pakistan. His old enemies came looking for him and he is now missing. His mother is desperate to find him.*

'I want to mention my sons, because we can't send them to school. Because if I send them to school, something might happen.' – Azim

## Zhara

Zhara is an elderly Afghan woman whose son Sher Muhammed was returned in 2002. He had spent eighteen months in detention on Nauru. Sher Muhammed and his family fled to Pakistan but his old enemies came looking for him. He is now missing and his mother is desperate to find him.

Zhara is illiterate. She brings the documents related to her son's case for asylum to Phil and is grateful that he listens to her story. When Zhara leaves, Phil offers her money for a taxi but she politely refuses, 'I didn't come here to take your money, dear brother. When a person is oppressed it's bad enough, but when someone offers you money it makes it worse.'

- Use the following statement to generate a discussion of Zhara and her son's case for asylum. Ask students to draw on other statements and moments to explain their points of view.

*The Taliban killed my husband, they martyred him. They looted and destroyed our belongings. I took my sons and went to Pakistan so nothing would happen to them. But while we were in Pakistan the same people came after him. So he said, 'I have to leave the country'. He went to Australia but a year and a half later he came back. He came back here but they continued to harass him. I am going crazy from all the worry. I have visited tombs, mullahs and fortune tellers.*

– Zhara

## Mubarek

'They didn't ask anyone for evidence or supporting material, they only looked into our cases for the sake of formality.' – Azim

'They told us that even if we stayed there for ten years, we would never be accepted. Because of this and the constant worry about my family, I was forced to come back.' – Azim

*We were sitting at home one night when there was a big explosion outside. There was one bang, then another, we were sitting in the room and shrapnel came through the window where everyone was sitting. My daughter Yalda was by the window and she got hit by the shrapnel. Yalda died on the spot. She didn't even make it to hospital. Also Rowna was my younger daughter ... after a few minutes she was dead.* – Azim

Mubarek Nayef is a Bidun from Kuwait. After the first gulf war, Biduns were expelled from Kuwait and regularly granted asylum by Australia. This changed under the Howard Government. Australia rejected Mubarek's request for asylum in 2002. Kuwait refused to accept him back, so Australia sent him to Syria on a six-month visa. After Mubarek's visa ran out he lived in hiding in Syria without an identity. He tells Phil that living in hiding was 'still better than the prison there in Australia.'

The Syrian authorities finally arrested Mubarek for not having a valid visa. He was detained and beaten unconscious. Phil believes it didn't have to be this way. Knowing that Canada gives asylum to Kuwaitis and that they have already accepted Mubarek's brother, Phil contacts the Canadian Embassy in Damascus. Within forty-eight hours, Mubarek was released and flown to Canada.

In *A Well-Founded Fear*, Phil visits Mubarek in Ottawa, where he now lives with his family.

- Use the following statements to generate a discussion of Mubarek and his case for asylum. Ask students to draw on other statements and moments to explain their points of view.

‘I told them, “I signed to return to Kuwait.” They told me, “No”. What will I do in Syria? My family’s in Kuwait.’ – Mubarek

‘Well thank God for Canada.’ – Phil

‘I hope to be a good person here in this community, in this country. And I want to help other people if they have like our situation.’ – Mubarek

## Wahab

Wahab Majin was a political opponent of Saddam Hussein. The Australia Federal Government rejected his application for asylum in 2003. Like Mubarek, Wahab was then sent to Syria on a short-term visa. He confirms Australia used dubious methods to deport asylum seekers. Wahab witnessed Australian officials at Port Hedland deport Kuwaiti Biduns, Iraqis, Palestinians and a Pakistani to Syria. Wahab’s visa indicated that he was to contact the Public Security Department within fifteen days of his arrival in Syria, he knew that this would put him at risk, ‘Of course, I’d be killed you know?’

Phil and Wahab decide to meet in Istanbul because it is not safe to meet in Iraq where Wahab now lives since the fall of Saddam Hussein. Just before their meeting, Phil learns that Wahab has been detained at the airport because of complications with his visa. While Phil is agitated by the bureaucratic obstacles that frustrate their meeting, he is all the more determined to pursue justice for Wahab. They eventually meet in Tehran.

- Use the following statements to generate a discussion of Wahab and his case for asylum. Ask students to draw on other statements and moments to explain their points of view.

‘Going to Syria wasn’t a choice.’ – Wahab

‘Poor old Iraqis. Absolutely no one wants them.’ – Phil

‘This is what I want to make clear actually. This is a false passport. And they knew this was a false passport.’ – Wahab

‘If I’d been released maybe I’d be a good person in Australia. And I hope you know, in the future, things will not happen like what happened to me.’ – Wahab

## A Well-Founded Fear

The test for determining well-founded fear was enunciated by the High Court in *Chan v MIEA*. The Court held that ‘well founded-fear’ involves both a subjective and objective element. The definition will be satisfied if an applicant can show genuine fear founded upon a ‘real chance’ of persecution.

An explanation of the term can be found at [http://www.mrt-rrt.gov.au/docs/guidereflaw/wff\\_ch3.pdf](http://www.mrt-rrt.gov.au/docs/guidereflaw/wff_ch3.pdf). The document defines both the subjective and objective element of a well-founded fear and explains the nature of the real chance test.

The document acknowledges that there can be no set procedure in assessing whether there is a real chance of persecution. The process of establishing whether an applicant’s fear is well-founded will involve making findings of fact based on an assessment of the applicant’s claims and relevant country information, speculation as to the reasonably foreseeable future and a finding as to whether there is a real chance that persecution will occur.

- Read and annotate a hard copy of the document. Spend time discussing the implications of each part of the document. Make links to the stories of the returnees featured in *A Well-Founded Fear*.

## Human rights and Australia’s responsibility

Use Phil Glendenning’s statements to generate a discussion of Australia’s responsibilities in regard to asylum seekers.

‘Many of the returnees we’ve met have managed to hold on to their humanity in the face of unbearable sadness. But Australia lost some of our humanity when we treated them the way we did. If we are ever to regain the humanity we’ve lost then we must now take responsibility for what we have done.’

‘It’s a basic human right to live in safety and live in security and for some reason unbeknownst to me that Government decided that they were quite prepared to cross that line and play around fast and loose with the truth of people’s lives. You know, at some point you’ve got to take human rights seriously. It burns me up fair dinkum.’

‘How could it be that we could allow this to happen and at the same time not imagine how we would feel if it was done to us. What were we afraid of?’

‘Unless we know what has happened to these people we’ll never know if the government made the right decision to send them back.’

‘We just couldn’t summon up enough love to somehow do the right thing. So much other stuff gets in the way of that.’

‘At the same time that we sent our troops into Iraq we had this bloke locked up in the detention centre. I just hope that the people who made these decisions can sleep comfortably in their beds because I know I can’t.’

## Production Values

- Examine the opening and closing sequence of *A Well-Founded Fear*. What are the filmmaker’s intentions?
- Phil Glendenning and Anne Delaney narrate the documentary. Discuss the role of the narrators in *A Well-Founded Fear*.
- Make a list of the key visual motifs.
- What part does music play in *A Well-Founded Fear*?
- Working as a class, and by drawing on moments and aspects of the documentary, make a list of the challenges of telling the stories of the deported asylum seekers and of filming *A Well-Founded Fear*.
- Discuss the use of archival footage and still photographs to tell the stories of the deported asylum seekers.
- The filmmakers take us onto the streets of Kabul in Afghanistan, Damascus in Syria, Istanbul in Turkey, Ottawa in Canada and Tehran in Iran. What purpose do these scenes serve? Write a description of life on the streets of one of the locations. Draw on the scenes from *A Well-Founded Fear* to create your description.

## Review

Read the following comments that have been made about *A Well-Founded Fear*:

*Everyone should watch this documentary. It explains how harshly people seeking asylum have been treated, and how Australian Governments have too often returned what they regard as failed asylum seekers to situations of very real danger. When will we again find our humanity?*

– Malcolm Fraser,  
former Australian prime minister

*Every Australian should see this film and face what our government did in our name. There is no escaping our collective responsibility for the terrible official actions that led to the destruction of life and hope for those who asked us for help and were rejected. Phil Glendenning says, at some time you have to take human rights seriously. This stark, powerful and truthful film should convince Australia that now is that time.*

– Susan Ryan AO,  
chair, Human Rights Act for Australia Campaign

*A Well-Founded Fear confronts us with the knowledge that the effects of the Tampa and the Pacific Solution are still blighting the lives of the people who sought asylum on our shores. Cutting through the complex tangles of bureaucratic artifice which cast them out, the film compassionately exposes the real life and death consequences of these decisions for so many people whose sin was to ask for help.*

– Dr Carmen Lawrence,  
former federal MP and minister,  
Professional Fellow, University of Western Australia

*A powerful and important film. A Well-Founded Fear is just what is needed ... to make people aware that we need to begin to redress some of the wrongs that have been done in our name.*

– Curtis Levy, Producer/Director,  
*The President Versus David Hicks*

*Thousands of Australians refuse to be complicit in this nation’s denial of its responsibilities to provide sanctuary to the politically oppressed and work for justice and compassion for those seeking refuge at our door. This documentary movingly tells part of the story of the thousands who valued their rights and responsibilities as global citizens above the political expediency of an intolerant government.*

– Pat Dodson, Yawuru elder, former Chair of the  
Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation,  
and Paul Lane, Lingiari Foundation

- Write your own statement of endorsement and pin it on an endorsement noticeboard.
- Find out more about one of the people who have endorsed the documentary. What role have they played in making Australia a more socially just country?

## Research

- Working in small teams, use online news services and newspapers to locate news stories about people who have sought asylum in Australia. Read the articles and discuss the dimensions of each story.

‘We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances under which they come.’

– John Howard, former prime minister of Australia

John Howard’s notorious 2001 election speech summarized his government’s policy on asylum seekers.

- Use online newspaper services to locate news reports, feature articles, opinions, editorials, letters to the editors and cartoons about the Howard Federal Government’s response to asylum seekers.
- Search your library’s audiovisual resources catalogue and use the internet to find video and audio segments about the Howard Federal Government’s response to asylum seekers.
- Turn your classroom into a time capsule by creating an installation that makes a statement about

the Howard Federal Government's response to asylum seekers. Invite other classes to visit your installation and learn more about this period in Australia's recent history.

- Research how other Australian Federal Governments have responded to asylum seekers. Share your findings with the class.
- What is the current government's response to asylum seekers?

## Respond

The following topics could be discussed via written text responses, debates, panel discussions and online forums.

- 'A *Well-Founded Fear* changes the way we see the world.' Do you agree?
- 'A *Well-Founded Fear* shows humanity at its best and worst.' Discuss.
- 'Phil Glendenning is dedicated to social justice.' Discuss.
- Is Australia's refugee policy too strict?
- Design an A5 flyer that would be used to advertise *A Well-Founded Fear*.

Show students examples of these flyers that are usually placed in the foyer of cinemas. As a class, discuss the format, purpose, written language and visual language of this type of publication.

- Prepare a multimedia presentation about one of the following locations: Kabul in Afghanistan, Damascus in Syria, Ottawa in Canada, Turkey in Istanbul and Tehran in Iran. Provide your audience with an insight into the nature of life in this location.

## Links

Edmund Rice Centre

<http://www.erc.org.au>

Department of Immigration and Citizenship

<http://www.immi.gov.au>

The role of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship is to manage the entry and settlement of people in Australia.

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

<http://www.hreoc.gov.au>

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is a government body overseeing the application of federal legislation in the area of human rights, anti-discrimination, social justice and privacy.

Amnesty International Australia

<http://www.amnesty.org.au>

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of people campaigning to protect human rights.

Australian Refugee Association

<http://www.ausref.net>

The Australian Refugee Association is a not-for-profit organization. The organization's mission is to seek the fair and humane treatment of refugees in Australia.

A Well-Founded Fear

<http://www.novemberfilms.com.au/films/a-well-founded-fear/>

(To be launched in November 2008)

## References

*A Well-Founded Fear* press kit, 2008.



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