

Democratic Labor Party

Federal Branch

MEDIA RELEASE

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DLP DEBUNKS FOOLISH FANTASY OF EAST TIMOR CAMP

"This foolish fantasy lays bare the incompetence of ALP policy formation."

- Queensland DLP Senate team leader, Tony Zegenhagen.

- TWO-FOR-ONE REFUGEE PLAN FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY -

Queensland DLP Senate team leader Tony Zegenhagen announced today that the Democratic Labor Party rejects any plan to establish an asylum seeker processing centre in East Timor. "This foolish fantasy lays bare the incompetence of ALP policy formation."

"The ALP has demonstrated gross insensitivity towards our neighbours the East Timorese, and moreover has failed to consider the serious problems involved in the Gillard proposal," said Tony Zegenhagen. "Those problems include the stresses of inserting into impoverished East Timor a bunch of mostly male would-be immigrants, with much higher purchasing power than the majority of the locals, and the fact that East Timor is burdened by malaria, dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, tuberculosis, dysentery and even rabies."

"The best way to shut down the people smugglers and corrupt bureaucrats is by making arrangements with existing camps in the region. There are thousands of legitimate refugees (some in their second generation) waiting to be resettled in camps in Pakistan and on the Thai-Burma border. The Democratic Labor Party plan is for Australia to transport asylum seekers arriving by boat to the end of queue in these camps for processing, and in return accept from the camps two legitimate refugees for each asylum seeker delivered by Australia."

"The DLP two-for one plan would be an attractive arrangement for organisations such as the Thai Burma Border Consortium which provides for 160,000 refugees in ten camps. The certainty of being delivered to one of these camps in exchange for two already-processed refugees would be a powerful disincentive to the sorts of people who presently imagine that Australia has an open door for anyone wealthy enough to pay the people smugglers."

Tony Zegenhagen promised that when elected, he will bring in a Private Member's Bill to end the processing of asylum seekers in Australia, by implementation of the Democratic Labor Party plan. "This plan will soon halt the boat arrivals, cut the burgeoning cost of processing, save hundreds of lives that could be lost at sea and reduce pressure on existing camps in the region".

"I am proud to be member and spokesman for an historically compassionate party in a compassionate nation. The DLP is determined that Australia will be a compassionate nation that protects its borders."

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