

8 October 2007

## Media Release

### “Liberty Victoria says Minister Andrews hits a new low”

Liberty Victoria expresses its dismay at Minister Andrews’ attack on Sudanese refugees. Julian Burnside QC, President of Liberty Victoria, said “The Sudanese come from a region of the world where the US Congress and President George W Bush have urged tough action, describing the conflict as genocide. It has been estimated that the genocide in Darfur has seen over 400,000 civilians killed and 2.5 million people displaced from their homes.”

According to Julian Burnside QC, “if ever there was a case for an increase in refugees from Africa, this surely must be it. Instead our Minister for Immigration has disgraced himself and his government by exploiting the vulnerability of the Sudanese and scapegoating them as the cause of social problems”.

“Christine Nixon, the Commissioner of Police in Victoria, says there is no evidence that they are over-represented in Victoria’s crime statistics. The crime data in Queensland shows that the Sudanese are either under-represented or the same as all other groups, including the white Australian population, in crime statistics. The fact that some Australians believe otherwise is plain wrong, and it’s Minister Andrews’ job to challenge wrong perceptions about particular groups not use those perceptions for electoral advantage.”

“Singling out black Africans for their failure to integrate, particularly when fleeing a country where genocide is occurring, simply ignores the facts of being a refugee. Of course refugees have challenges in resettling: they are traumatised by the events from which they are fleeing. It seems Mr Andrews wants only story-book refugees who are white, well-educated, undamaged people. Imagine if that attitude had been taken after the Holocaust”, said Julian Burnside QC.

“Australians need to show the Government that we are a generous, hospitable nation, by rejecting this Government’s attack on the Sudanese. As Australians opened their hearts to Jewish refugees in the 1940s, we need to demonstrate again that we are willing to help people fleeing from tyranny and genocide. If the Sudanese are having problems integrating then it is up to us as a people and as a nation to help them make the journey”.

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