

# Border order

By **Peri Strathearn**

COALITION Immigration spokesman Scott Morrison has defended the policy of processing and re-settling asylum seekers who arrive by boat outside of Australia during a visit to Murray Bridge.

The man who may become Australia's next Immigration Minister said an orderly immigration program - one that would prevent deaths at sea, cost blowouts and asylum seekers taking offshore applicants' visa places - was the ultimate embodiment of the fair-go principle.

"It's an economic program, not a welfare program," Mr Morrison said.

"Migrants end up creating jobs, not taking jobs, when it is run properly, but you can't run a proper immigration program when you can't control your borders."

He rejected the suggestion that

"push factors" - trouble in distant lands - had more to do with asylum seeker numbers than Government policy, and said the fairness of the Coalition's plan to process thousands of asylum seekers in Nauru - a country six kilometres wide with a smaller population than Murray Bridge - was not the issue.

"The issue is how offshore processing fits within a broader framework of measures," he said.

"It's about denying the (people smugglers') product." When asked what a Coalition government would do if its policies were unable to stop the boats, he smiled unwaveringly.

"We believe they will," he said.

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"We remain very confident that, in our first term, an Abbott government will achieve its objective, and we don't make it (that promise) lightly."

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## Border order will turn back boats

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Mr Morrison was in Murray Bridge to support Liberal candidate for Barker Tony Pasin and address 60 of the local party faithful at a fundraising dinner.

He also toured Thomas Foods' abattoir during his visit.

As well as the promise to "stop the boats", Coalition policies include offshore processing for asylum seekers who arrive without visas and a presumption against refugee status for those who do not have identification documents.

Labor recently adopted a similar policy of processing and re-settling asylum seekers overseas, including in Papua New Guinea and Nauru, if they do not have valid visas.

Family First do not have an official asylum seeker policy, while the Greens are opposed to offshore processing and in favour of doubling Australia's refugee intake.

The United Nations Refugee Convention, which includes Australia, says asylum seekers are exempt from the requirement for a valid visa; but a change to Australia's Migration Act in 2011 barred non-citizens from arriving without a visa regardless of our international obligations.

According to the Refugee Council of Australia, Government policy is the only reason asylum seekers who arrive by boat take visa places away from those who apply from overseas - no other country in the world counts boat people as part of its voluntary refugee intake.



**On the beat:** Coalition Immigration Spokesman Scott Morrison toured Murray Bridge on Monday with candidate for Barker Tony Pasin and Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick.