



## Refugee Council of Australia

### **RESPONSE TO ANDREW BOLT'S OPINION PIECE IN HERALD SUN, 14 MAY 2010**

The Editor,  
The Herald Sun

Dear Editor,

In his criticisms of the Refugee Council of Australia and our president John Gibson, the only thing which Andrew Bolt got right is that Mr Gibson is a man of integrity.

Mr Gibson was invited by the Australian Government to sit as a community member on the interview panel for Migration and Refugee Review Tribunal members because of his knowledge and extensive experience in domestic and international refugee law and his 25-year connection with organisations serving the interests of refugees.

He accepted the invitation because he and the Refugee Council are committed to a refugee status determination system independent of political interference. It is essential that this system provides protection from persecution for those who require it and facilitates dignified return for those who don't.

The Refugee Council is proud of its 30-year record of independent research and advice on refugee issues. Founded by Major General Paul Cullen with strong support from community, religious and overseas aid organisations, the Council's membership today includes 130 organisations working directly with refugees and asylum seekers.

Just as our founder did, Mr Gibson works hard to ensure that our organisation maintains its independence and continues constructive and frank dialogue with both Government and Opposition, regardless of whether or not we receive government funding. We can do this because, far from being close to bankruptcy as Mr Bolt implies, we receive strong financial support from our members, individual donors and philanthropic trusts.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Power".

Paul Power  
Chief Executive Officer  
Refugee Council of Australia

14 May 2010