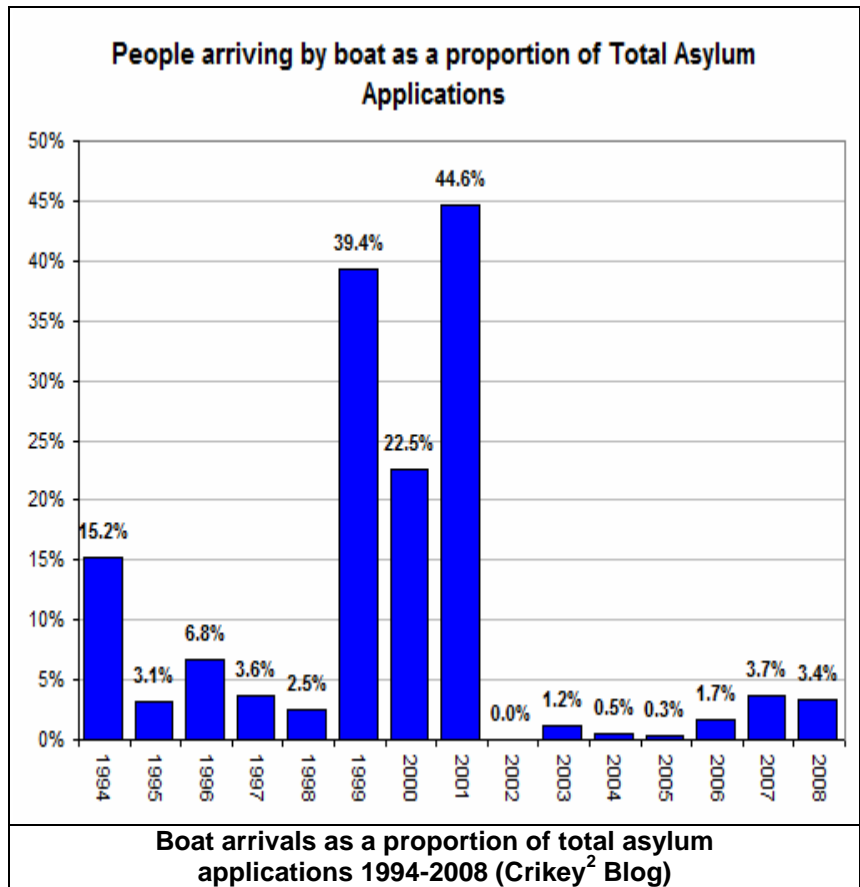


Keeping Perspective: Australia's boat arrivals

(re-compiled by Project SafeCom 2009-12)

"The first boat arrived in Darwin in April 1976 carrying five Indochinese men. Over the next five years there were 2059 Vietnamese boat arrivals with the last arriving in August 1981. The arrival of 27 Indochinese asylum seekers in November 1989 heralded the beginning of the second wave"¹.

Australia's boat arrivals 1976-2011		
year	no of boats	passengers
1976	56	111
1977		868
1978		746
1979		304
1981		30
1989	1	27
1990	2	198
1991	6	214
1992	6	216
1993	3	81
1994	18	953
1995	7	237
1996	19	660
1997	11	339
1998	17	200
1999	86	3,721
2000	51	2,939
2001	43	5,516
2002	1	1
2003	1	53
2004	1	15
2005	4	11
2006	6	60
2007	5	148
2008	7	161
2009	60	2,727
2010	132	6,502
2011	69	4,572
2012	35	2,599
total	647	34,209



1. Boat numbers 1976-1981

The number of boats between 1976 and 1981 is ambiguous. Betts (footnote 2) and Phillips & Spinks only show passenger numbers; Andreas Schoenhardt (footnote 4) puts the number (between 1976 and 1978) at 55 boats, and Fraser's Immigration Minister Ian Macphie tells the House of Representatives on May 1, 1980 that 53 boats have arrived since 1976.

2. The years 2001-2004: Howard did not stop the boats

Possum Comitatus (footnote 5) explains, that "The Pacific Solution ... diddled the stats by redefinition. Boats still made the attempt to enter Australia ... yet we know that SIEV(s) 5, 7, 11 and 12 in 2002 attempted to make the journey and were returned to Indonesia while SIEV(s) 4, 6 and 10 actually sank. That was in very late 2001 through late 2002. In 2003 we know that boats were still attempting to make the voyage such as SIEV 14, but were again towed back from whence they came. The UNHCR estimates that 1600 people were diverted throughout the time of the Pacific Solution, but hard numbers are difficult to come by." Additionally, during 2002 two boats attempted to sail directly to New

Zealand from Indonesia; one boat is presumed to have foundered with 34 passengers, a second one was stopped in Dili. In 2004 another boat attempted this journey³.

2. Stats from Oct 2009

From Oct 2009 data are compiled from media reports and Immigration Department & Minister for Home Affairs media releases. Numbers of arrivals do not include crew: only passengers are counted.

¹ Phillips, Janet and Spinks, Harriet. (2009). *Boat arrivals in Australia since 1976*. Parliamentary Library, Social Policy Section Background Note. Online only 25 June 2009 updated 14 July 2009; 4 August 2009, 18 November 2009. Location: <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bn/sp/boatarrivals.htm>

² Possum Comitatus, Push vs. Pull – Asylum Seeker Numbers and Statistics. *Crikey*, 19 Oct. 2009 See <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/politics/2009/10/19/push-vs-pull-asylum-seeker-numbers-and-statistics/>

³ Six asylum boats aim for NZ in eight years. *Otago Daily Times*, 18 Dec 010 <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/national/141390/six-asylum-boats-aim-nz-eight-years>

Annual boat arrivals in Australian waters 2012

Below is the table of asylum boat arrivals in Australian waters during the year 2012. The table was compiled by Project SafeCom Inc.⁴ from web-based media statements by the Federal Minister for Home Affairs. Some additional details have been provided from media reports.

Annual boat arrivals in Australian waters 2012				
	press release date ⁵	passengers	crew ⁶	location
1	January 3	35	2	southwest of Ashmore Reef
2	January 3	16	1	(Burmese) Tiwi Islands, off Darwin
3	January 7	119	2	north of Christmas Island
4	January 17	74	2	east-north-east of Christmas Island
5	January 19	56	2	north-east of Christmas Island
6	February 11	125	2	north of Christmas Island
7	February 15	121	6	north north-west of Ashmore Islands
8	February 15	69	2	north-west of Christmas Island
9	February 17	63	2	north north-east of Christmas Island
10	February 17	71	0	west of Christmas Island
11	February 18	79	2	near Christmas Island
12	February 21	143	4	north of Christmas Island
13	February 22	98	2	north of Christmas Island
14	February 22	96	2	north of Christmas Island
15	March 6	26	0	north-west of Christmas Island
16	March 13	34	3	northeast of Ashmore Reef
17	March 24	50	2	south-east of Ashmore Islands
18	April 2	43	2	north of Tiwi Islands
19	April 3	81	3	north-west of Ashmore Islands
20	April 5	71	0	north-east of Scott Reef
21	April 6	49	4	north of Ashmore Islands
22	April 9	10	0	Darwin Harbour (Chinese – lawful arrivals)
23	April 11	99	0	west of Christmas Island
24	April 11	156	0	north-west of Christmas Island
25	April 13	75	2	north-east of Christmas Island
26	April 14	19	0	north of Christmas Island
27	April 18	55	2	southwest of Browse Island
28	April 26	50	2	near Ashmore Islands
29	April 27	60	0	north-west of Ashmore Islands
30	April 29	164	6	north-west of Christmas Island
31	April 30	27	0	north of Christmas Island
32	May 6	103	2	north of Christmas Island
33	May 6	138	0	north of Christmas Island
34	May 7	64	4	north of Ashmore Islands
35	May 10	60	0	north north-west of Ashmore Island
	totals	2599	63	

⁴ Homepage for this document is <http://www.safecom.org.au/ref-documents.htm#boats>

⁵ Hon Jason Clare, Minister for Home Affairs,
Media Releases: <http://www.ministerhomeaffairs.gov.au/>

⁶ Zero crew in this table means "no crew mentioned in ministerial press release".