



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Hansard 26 March 2003

IRAQI REFUGEES

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (10.22 a.m.): I have been asked by many church and community members in Brisbane to support the national call for an act of grace. The act of grace statement is a push by the National Council of Churches and refugee advocacy groups for the Howard government to grant residence to all refugees currently on temporary protection visas who have been law abiding. The act of grace calls for the release into the community by Easter this year of asylum seekers who are not a health, identity or security concern. Prime Minister John Howard has subjected the 3,700 Iraqi refugees who have fled to Australia to escape the tyranny of Saddam Hussein and thousands of others to further violation on our own shores. Yet, one of the justifications Prime Minister Howard gave for sending troops to war was to free the Iraqi people from tyranny. What hypocrisy!

Mr Howard knows that right now there are women, children and men behind razor wire in detention under his government's direction. Mr Howard knows that in some instances fathers of families are in the community on a TPV while their wives and children languish in detention. I and millions of Australians do not support the war on Iraq, and I sure do not support the hypocrisy of John Howard. Not in our name, Prime Minister, will you treat inhumanely the refugees who come to our shores. In our names as Australians, I support the call upon the parliament of Australia to grant an act of grace to refugees this Easter. In our names, I urge the Prime Minister to provide humanitarian aid to the refugees from Iraq who are the victims of this horrendous war. In our names, I urge him to bring home safely our courageous troops before Easter this year.