



Transcript
The Hon Kevin Andrews MP
Member for Menzies

Nights with Steve Price and Andrew Bolt
2GB Radio
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E&OE.....

Topic: Recent gang fighting in Melbourne CBD

ANDREW BOLT:

Now it is interesting how this issue has been buried. 2007, our Immigration Minister was Kevin Andrews.

STEVE PRICE:

Who's about to join us...

ANDREW BOLT:

Who's about to join us, and he recognised this and said publicly there was a problem with the crime rates here, and he wound back a program that Amanda Vanstone as Immigration Minister had recklessly done of just taking all these people who were going to struggle to fit in because of their language, their culture and all that kind of stuff, warzone trauma, no father. All this kind of thing and dump them in a working class suburbs where there are no job and expect them to do well. Well they didn't and they haven't.

He tried to do that and what followed showed us why the people who claim to feel good and represent good have made us at more risk of what we saw in Melbourne the other night, riots etc etc. Kevin Andrews thank you so much for joining us.

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Pleasure to be with you Andrew and Steve

ANDREW BOLT:

Now Kevin what shocked me at the time, you made public this problem. You tried to fix it and shut the gate in 2007. We're talking nine years ago and what happened to you was the Chief Commissioner of Victoria then, Christine Nixon, went public and said wait a minute the Sudanese and the Somalians are actually under-represented in the crime stats. That was not true, was it?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

No, it wasn't. Look, what I tried to highlight at the time I thought was quite reasonable and that is that if we are bringing in reasonable numbers of people from another country, particularly young, uneducated, and potentially unemployed people then we have to vary the rate at which we bring them into Australia to ensure they settle. By which I mean they get the education, they get the opportunity to work but that wasn't appreciated at the time and I think we went through a period under Christine Nixon as the Police Commissioner and subsequently under Simon Overland, and possibly under successors...

STEVE PRICE:

Even Ken Lay maybe...

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Of soft policing. It was a policy pursued under those Chief Commissioners of Police. Look, there's a place to build community relations and I support that. In my own electorate today there's a great police group that do a lot of work with multicultural communities in my electorate. But there also must be a firm line or a strong response when there is clearly anti-social behaviour and that was what I was trying to highlight at the time.

ANDREW BOLT:

Kevin...

STEVE PRICE:

Can I just ask a question, Andrew?

ANDREW BOLT:

Steve, I just need to throw a quote at him. Yes, you raised this but your example shows the difficulty of calling out say Islamist terrorists as well or hate preachers as well, Sheik Hilaly and all that kind of stuff. In that when you try to raise the issue at a time when something can be done you're demonised. Here *The Age* in 2007, when you pointed out that the crime rate was high and the Police Commissioner falsely claimed it wasn't, in fact it was four times higher than normal and she's never explained how she made that incorrect

statement. *The Age* Newspaper, for example, criticised you for being unpleasant, inflammatory, unfair, aiming specifically at one community and perhaps dog whistling essentially calling you a racist trying to get up a racist vote.

What is the story here? How hard is it in Australia to have a serious, fact-based conversation on our immigration and our refugee programs?

STEVE PRICE:

The same paper by the way that editorialised today that we have a major problem.

ANDREW BOLT:

Absolutely too late.

KEVIN ANDREWS:

That's true, Steve. Look, it's very difficult to say. I have to be frank and say I think there is a totalitarianism impulse, if I can put it that way, amongst certain sections of the left who if they don't like a contrary argument rather than trying to meet that argument prefer to say that someone is a racist or a homophobe or whatever the subject maybe is. It would be much better to have a discussion about what the problem is. If we'd had an honest discussion back in 2007/2008 about these issues then maybe we would have addressed some of the things that we are still dealing with today.

STEVE PRICE:

Can you remind me why you first thought back then that this was potentially a problem?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

For two reasons Steve. In our Refugee or Humanitarian Program we, at that stage, were bringing 70 per cent of people from Africa. I actually reduced that to 30 per cent in the year that I was the Immigration Minister, but the reason I did it was because I'd been out to some of those communities. I'd seen young men in their late teens and early twenties whose education levels in their own country was probably mid to late primary school who didn't fit in with education in Australia and were basically uneducated by our standards and unemployed and probably in many instances unemployable. Now, I just thought that we've got to find a way to ensure that we provide the services for these young, mostly men, in those circumstances before we keep bringing more and more in and adding to the problem.

STEVE PRICE:

So you hit pause, what happened subsequently to the level from areas like Southern Sudan and Ethiopia?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Well the pause was maintained despite the outcry at the time from certain sections of the media and the left. The pause was largely maintained but it didn't stop them criticising me and saying that somehow I was being racist. I was actually, in my view, being quite the contrary. I was saying, the great achievement in Australia is to balance two things. One is our diversity of people from virtually every country in the world and every ethnic and cultural background have settled in Australia. But we've also done that by balancing a sense of integration and a sense of being one people with one destiny as, I think it was, Henry Parkes who said over a century ago, one of the great founders of Australia, and I thought that this balance was getting out of kilter and we needed to slow down the intake so that we ensure that the integration occurred. Then if that occurred well then you could bring more people from those backgrounds.

ANDREW BOLT:

The most shocking thing in all this, and to some extent it has happened in New South Wales worst I think probably of any state than Victoria, where the police have refused to issue press releases when there's been race riots, pretended it has not happened or they've obscured the nationalities involved. Like right now with this one in Melbourne they're saying Caucasians were involved too, you know come on. But with Christine Nixon that was worse she went public to shame you by making a claim that turned out to be completely false. Saying the African crime rates among these refugee communities was lower than the average for the rest of the community. Has she ever gone to you and apologised or explained why she said something that was so untrue?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Well, no she hasn't Andrew to answer your question directly. But look, I think this whole era that we had in Australia, what I call soft policing may well have been motivated by good intentions at the time but it wasn't realistic. It's a good thing for the police to actually develop good relations with ethnic and multicultural communities, I support that but there has to be a line when there is clearly anti-social behaviour and we have to draw a line against that and have a strong response.

STEVE PRICE:

So, the only area I'm now confused about is if we accept that the Apex Gang that erupted onto the streets of Melbourne on Saturday night were somewhere aged between 15 and 22, they were 5 and 12 at the time you rang the alarm bell. What's the problem today, if we've slowed the rate down have we not been able to fix the problem?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

No, we haven't Steve because you've basically got a backlog of people who we haven't been able to provide the appropriate services for and you know it's a good thing we slowed the intake down because that problem could be greater today.

STEVE PRICE:

Well I just saw the graph that showed the spike and it's quite unbelievable.

KEVIN ANDREWS:

Yeah, and if you take a soft policing attitude as we've done for at least a decade now, then you're going to continue to have these problems.

ANDREW BOLT:

Now Kevin looking at...

KEVIN ANDREWS:

The bells are ringing; I have to go to a division in a minute

ANDREW BOLT:

Quickly, 12,000 refugees from Syria, is that a good idea based on what we've seen now?

KEVIN ANDREWS:

If we can bring in the most persecuted minorities which are Christians and Jews and others like that then we should do that because we've got the capability of doing that but we should do it in a pace which we can ensure they settle in Australia which was my point back in 2007.

BOLT & PRICE:

Thanks for your time

ANDREW BOLT:

Go to the vote, see you mate.

Ends.....