

## New Zealand Press Council

20 February 2007

Submission from Deborah Coddington, Senior Writer, North & South magazine.

"Asian Angst: Is It Time to Send Some Back", December 2006

Submissions in response to complaints from Charles Mabbett, Asia New Zealand Foundation; Tze Ming Mok, Auckland writer; Russell Brown et al.

I have read through all these complaints, and their appendix and copies of letters to the editor (which have subsequently been published). Essentially these complaints cover the same issues. I have responded individually to some, and will respond in general to the overall philosophy of the complaints.

### 1. Charles Mabbett, Asia New Zealand Foundation.

It is important to record that the Asia New Zealand Foundation (ANZF), on its website, states in regard to "media" that it "offers journalists from throughout New Zealand the chance to travel to Asia to research and prepare stories through its Media Travel Awards".

The ANZF uses funding from the Government and business (both of whom have a vested interest in promoting Asian immigration) to do this. These stories are required to be positive: "intended to encourage interesting, considered, in-depth coverage of Asian issues".

I think it is important to distinguish between what is a form of public relations, and what is journalism. I very much doubt my article for *North & South* would qualify for funding from ANZF, or win one of their media awards. I suspect that with numerous media awards now offered from sector groups, often involving large amounts of cash as a prize, to promote their own issues, there is increasing confusion between what is journalism and what is public relations.

I will now deal with specific issues in Mabbett's complaint:

- Cover – "send who back". The cover line states "send some back". Clearly the article refers to those who immigrate then commit serious crimes within a certain time. Mabbett states anyone who has been granted permanent residency or citizenship has the same rights, and yes, that is the status quo. But that doesn't preclude debate about it. The article aimed to prompt further discussion about this legislation, and for this reason I interviewed the Minister of Immigration, and the Opposition spokesman. Laws can be changed.
- Legal Aid – the article never stated the Legal Services Agency makes decisions based on ethnicity. The article raised the point that, contrary to what this writer and many readers assumed, you don't have to be a permanent resident or citizen