

Basic Detail Report



00030573

Title
Karoke compact video disc from the KAYUEN

Date
1990s

Primary Maker
Malata

Medium
Plastic

Dimensions
Overall: 120 mm, 0.02 kg

Name
Compact disc

History

KAYUEN was a Panama-registered coastal freighter that attempted to smuggle 69 illegal immigrants from China to Australia in May 1999. It was intercepted by HMAS FREMANTLE off Jervis Bay, NSW, following a three-week joint surveillance operation by the Australian Customs Service, Australian Federal Police, NSW Police, Coastwatch, Royal Australian Navy and Royal Australian Air Force. After a dramatic chase from Jervis Bay to Port Kembla, KAYUEN was detained by Federal Police and Customs and escorted to the Garden Island naval base in Sydney. KAYUEN's passengers were part of a new wave of illegal boat people arriving from China, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in the 1990s. In contrast to Indochinese boat people in the 1970s and 1980s, who organised their voyages collectively and shared costs amongst passengers, the new wave of Chinese boat people bought passages from entrepreneurs known colloquially as 'snakes heads.' In Australia they are referred to as people smugglers. Since the late 1980s, sophisticated people smuggling operations had been run out of China's Fujian province, a gateway to the west. KAYUEN's passengers paid around \$40,000 each to secure a passage in appalling conditions - hidden in false compartments under sand ballast in the vessel's cargo hold. Some would have paid upfront while others borrowed money from the smugglers, on the agreement that the fee would be repaid by their families at high interest rates. The arrival of KAYUEN attracted significant media attention because it exposed the vulnerability of Australia's entire coastline - not just the more traditional northern and western shores. It also followed closely on two other high-profile landings of illegal Chinese boat people at Holloways Beach, north of Cairns in Queensland, and Scotts Head, on the NSW north coast. As with these previous groups the illegal immigrants on KAYUEN were taken into custody and detained at the Port Hedland detention centre in Western Australia.