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## PEOPLE SMUGGLING IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) is a progressive and multi-faceted law enforcement organisation taking a strong lead in the fight against 21st century crime. At a national level, the AFP continues to work successfully with the Australian Government and key agencies on a range of counter-terrorism, crime-fighting and capacity building initiatives. The AFP is a truly global policing agency committed to staying one step ahead in a rapidly evolving criminal environment.

### People smuggling

Why people smuggling threatens all Australians

People smugglers are individuals or groups who assist others to illegally enter a country. In the case of Australia, people smugglers provide air or sea access.

People smuggling is a major threat to all Australians because:

- there are serious security and criminal concerns when people arriving in Australia are not properly identified
- there are major quarantine and health risks involved in people bypassing normal immigration channels
- processing illegal immigrants creates significant logistical problems and costs
- it infringes Australia's sovereignty, giving less control over the borders.

### People smuggling versus people trafficking

Although the terms people smuggling and people trafficking are often used interchangeably, they are different. People smugglers are paid by those who wish to enter a country illegally. The people wishing to migrate are involved voluntarily. People traffickers, on the other hand, use coercion and/or deception, to force people to illegally enter a country. Once the illegal immigrants are in place, people traffickers often continue to exploit them.

### Dealing with people smuggling

The Joint Agency Task Force (JATF) Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB) was established on 18 September 2013 to ensure a

whole-of-government effort to combat people smuggling and protect Australia's borders.

OSB is a military-led, border security operation supported and assisted by a wide range of Australian Government agencies. The joint AFP and Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) People Smuggling Strike Team (PSST) was established in May 2000 [2].

The strike team provides a centrally directed, highly mobile investigative capability against organised people-smuggling syndicates operating in Australia and overseas. The team consists of investigators as well as intelligence and financial analysts. The AFP is committed to a multiagency approach to combat people smuggling and acknowledges the effectiveness of this model.

Technological advances, including the widespread availability of fraudulent documentation, have prompted a maturing of the criminal activities undertaken by people smugglers. There is a greater awareness of policing abilities and methodology, and preparatory and overt acts are being conducted in more than one jurisdiction. It has become apparent that people smugglers are acting regionally rather than locally in one country, therefore it is imperative that capacity building and intelligence sharing opportunities should be pursued in source and transit countries across the region.

Since September 2008, there has been a surge in unauthorised maritime people smuggling ventures. The passengers are predominately of Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi and Sri Lankan nationalities.

To combat the spike in people smuggling activity, the AFP has generated a law enforcement program founded on three pillars: prosecution, disruption and capacity building. The prosecution strategy relies on foreign and Australian prosecution of people smugglers. The disruption strategy consists of providing actionable intelligence to inform foreign law enforcement action and prevent maritime ventures before they depart for Australia. The capacity building strategy is focused on enhancing the capacity of the Indonesian National Police and other law enforcement agencies across the region including in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Malaysia. [1]

An international effort

The offshore disruption of people smuggling has benefited substantially from the AFP International Network which works

closely with police agencies in a number of countries to facilitate the liaison and coordination required to disrupt maritime people smuggling ventures. The AFP also participates in a number of international forums specifically created to address people smuggling. These include:

**INTERPOL Operation Bridge** The objectives of this operation are to identify people smuggling networks, assist member states in their investigations, and establish a contact network of specialised officers to exchange information more efficiently.

**The Bali Process** This brings participants together to work on practical measures to help combat people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crimes in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Initiated at the Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime held in Bali in February 2002, the Bali Process follow-up is a collaborative effort participated in by more than 50 countries and many international agencies.

**Law Enforcement Cooperation Program (LECP)** The program is based around the international liaison officers network. Officers in the network form the link between countries, facilitating the exchange of information as well as enhancing communication and understanding by attending international conferences and seminars, promoting the LECP and building a rapport with law enforcement officers of host countries.

#### Reference list

1. <http://www.afp.gov.au/australian> federal police annual report 2013-14
2. <http://www.afp.gov.au/policing/people-smuggling>

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#### SHAPE OF ACTION OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Drug Enforcement Administration was created by President Richard Nixon through an Executive Order in July 1973 in order to establish a single unified command to combat "an all-out global war