



Australian Government



NO WAY

YOU WILL NOT MAKE AUSTRALIA HOME



The Australian Government has tough border protection measures to combat people smuggling.

- If you get on a boat without a visa, you will not end up in Australia.
- Any people smuggling boat attempting to enter Australian waters, or travel to New Zealand through Australian waters will be detected and intercepted.
- The rules apply to everyone: families, children, unaccompanied children, educated and skilled.
- No matter who you are or where you are from, you will not make Australia home.

**PEOPLE SMUGGLERS ARE DANGEROUS CRIMINALS.
THINK AGAIN BEFORE YOU WASTE YOUR MONEY. PEOPLE SMUGGLERS ARE LYING.**

www.australia.gov.au/novisa

Authorised by the Australian Government, Capital Hill, Canberra



Syrian boat refugees headed to Australia (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)
Cover: Australian Government's Counter People Smuggling Communication



Dear Delegates,

My name is Sneha Jain, and I will serve as your Crisis Director for the Australian Refugee Crisis Committee. I welcome you all, new and experienced delegates, to the HAMUN 42 and am excited you will be participating in this committee.

I'll start off with a brief introduction: I am a third-year student at the University of Texas at Austin, where I study Chemical Engineering, Plan II Honors, Economics, and Russian & Eastern European Studies. I currently serve as the USG of Finance for Central Texas Model United Nations and have a passion for mentorship, both in and out of MUN.



In our committee, we will be looking at the refugee crisis through the lens of a developed nation that struggles with domestic security, ethical responsibility, and international censure. As a cabinet member, the fate of the refugees will lie in your hands and you will be challenged with the daunting task of finding compromise. Though Australia may appear to be in a unique situation, I hope that you will also be able to find parallels between Australia and your own home country.

Please feel free to reach out to me at SnehaJain@utexas.edu for questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Sneha Jain



Australian Government

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Cabinet of Australia
FROM: Sneha Jain, Senior Policy Advisor
DATE: February 9, 2025
SUBJECT: Refugee Crisis

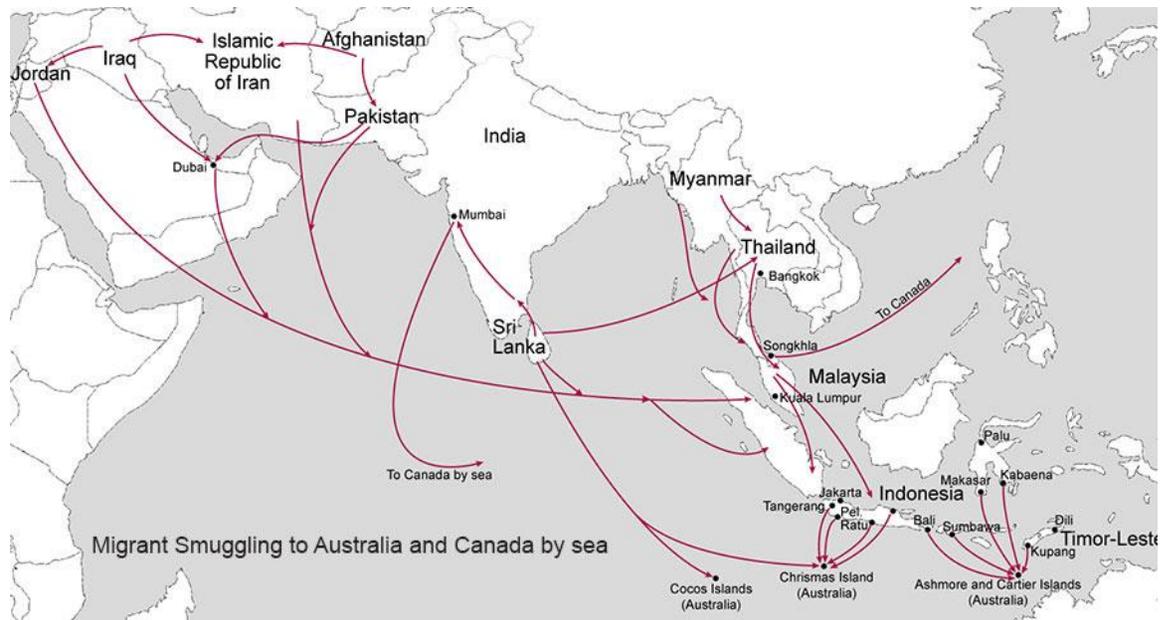
The tales of refugees bring sorrow in our hearts. It is truly difficult to watch families be forced to leave their homes to start anew. Australia welcomes refugees, as a part of its commitment to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Among approximately 20 nations worldwide, Australia participates in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' refugee resettlement programs, pledging to accept annual quotas of refugees. For Australia, this number has been approximately 13,000, with numbers varying with the Government's humanitarian initiatives. However, some asylum-seekers attempt to enter Australia outside of the prescribed legal means; they are smuggled into the country by air or by sea. Though the latter comprise a minority of refugees, they receive the most attention of the Government's refugee policy.

Migrant smuggling poses immense risks for all parties involved. For the asylum-seekers, there is the looming risk of death during transit and human rights abuses during and after reaching their destination. Undocumented migrants often end up with dangerous jobs offering low pay and are excluded from social welfare provisions. For the nation, there is a loss of tax revenue, incentivization towards corruption, and the cost of law enforcement. Most concerning for the nation, however, is the empowerment of criminals in this high-profit, low-risk crime and lack of control over the borders.

Asylum-Seekers Smuggled Into Australia

While it may appear that Australia would be an unlikely choice for asylum seekers due to its geographical isolation, thousands make the journey to Australian waters seeking a better life. Australia offers a relatively open immigration policy, a well-functioning welfare system, and economic stability. The graphic illustrates the migration patterns of smuggled asylum-seekers.



(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

The primary means of illegal asylum-seeking is by boat, and to a much lesser extent, by plane. Boat arrivals have occurred in waves, staged around war and persecution. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the first wave occurred from 1976 to 1981. Migrants from Cambodia, Vietnam, and southern China marked the second wave, lasting from 1989 to 1998. Illegal migration picked up again in 1999 from the Middle East and subsequently in 2015 from Iran and Syria, with each additional wave bringing forth larger and larger numbers.

Refugees typically find their way to Australia from Indonesia. Indonesia offers a quickly and easily accessible point of departure, due to allowing legal arrival visas or visa-free access from air travel for some migrants; other migrants resort to falsifying visa and/or passport documents. After a waiting period that can range anywhere from two weeks to several months, the smuggler transports the asylum-seekers via boat to the nearby Australian territories of Christmas Island or Ashmore Reef.

Starting in 2000, Australia began offering financial and technical support to Indonesia in intercepting smuggled migrants. This added risk has driven smugglers to favor smaller, cheaper, and poorly-maintained fishing vessels to increase profits. Consequently, increasing reports of fishing boats sinking while in transit have surfaced; this has driven public sympathy towards migrants and galvanized grassroots movements for human rights.

As more countries in the region begin criminalizing migrant smuggling, alternative departure ports have become common. Additional boats leave from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea, spurred along by the nations' limited border security.

Australia's Response to Smuggled Asylum-Seekers

The initial influx of so-called "boat people" was accepted with sympathy in Australia. However, with rising unemployment and a growing negative sentiment in comparison to traditional

immigration paths, dissatisfaction has grown. Aid offered to refugees has been considered by some as preferential treatment, prompting a sentiment that the arrivals may not even be “genuine refugees,” but opportunists [data, however, indicates that 90% of boat arrivals are found to be refugees]. The influx of the boat people has raised concern over the security and control of Australia’s borders.

Further waves of refugees were subject to tightened policies to ensure that arrivals met the criteria for refugees and curtail future boat arrivals. The Australian Government supported initiatives to stop the flow of refugees at the source, to arrange refugee processing elsewhere, to increase quotas for traditional means of migration, and to individually evaluate claims for asylum. In 1983, the Government additionally endorsed ‘durable solutions’ in which refugees were voluntarily repatriated, socially integrated into the country of first asylum, or, as a last resort, resettled to third countries.

Deterrence policies were later implemented with provisions for mandatory detention before entering Australia. Mandatory detention served to house asylum-seekers while assessing their claims; this additionally kept refugees out of the public eye. Offshore detention centers were later established on Nauru and Manus Island; despite their success in reducing the boat arrivals, the detention facilities were closed in 2008 for humanitarian concerns. These facilities were reopened in 2012; a 2013 agreement between Australia and Nauru outlined that Australia would pay for upkeep of the refugees, who would be instead resettled in Nauru. The United Nations Human Rights Council, however, criticized the detainment facilities and found them in violation of an international anti-torture convention. Though the High Court of Australia ruled in favor of the Government, public protest led to resettlement of 267 asylum seekers in Australia and the closure of the Manus Island facility. The Government later signed an agreement with Cambodia to resettle refugees from Nauru and Manus Island.

As of 2013, Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB), initiated by the Coalition government, has been in effect. OSB makes use of military force to intercept boat arrivals and turn them back to the country of departure or to another country for regional processing. A hard-line approach is taken for all--families, children, unaccompanied children, educated and skilled--without exception (see cover page). Legislation passed in 2017 additionally barred any migrants who have attempted to enter Australia illegally from ever obtaining a visa to enter the country legally.

Efforts have been made to increase migration through the Humanitarian Program. During the instability in the Middle East in 2015, Australia accepted an additional 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees. The Labor Party, while in power from 2019 to 2023, increased the annual quota to 15,000 refugees. During escalation and the reopening of conflict between North and South Korea in 2022, an additional provision of 5,000 refugees was instituted. The conflict came to a swift end, but repatriation of refugees was not possible due to the extent of damage the war had done to the land. Such policies were reversed by the Coalition Government upon returning to power, and the annual level was further reduced to 10,000 refugees.

Broadly, Australians support migrants arriving through Australia’s official Humanitarian Program, but negatively regard asylum seekers arriving by boat. However, poll analyses have demonstrated that though the opinions may be widely held, they are not considered issues of major

importance. As such, a stance on asylum and refugee issues rarely affects how Australian citizens vote, barring extenuating circumstances.

Global Response to Refugees

A number of countries, including Australia, have signed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, pledging to provide protection to asylum seekers as defined by the Convention.

With growing xenophobia, many nations have begun to find alternate means to fulfill their responsibilities towards refugees. Setting a price on the burden of a refugee has now become the norm, as nations are reluctant to accept migrants who they believe will take jobs, use public resources, and endanger citizens. Front-line and developing countries, which often face little choice in accepting refugees, have leveraged their positions in order to hedge against foreign criticism, blame asylum-seekers for domestic issues, and extort favors from wealthier, more developed nations.

Over the past decade, the percentage of displaced people in developing nations has pushed upwards from eighty percent to eighty nine percent. The European Union has decreased its own refugee quotas and has increasingly offered developing nations funds to resettle the refugees. With inadequate resources to support such a large influx of refugees, tension is mounting in these regions. International bodies, however, have overlooked the poor conditions of these environments, instead focusing on urging more countries to accept refugees.

Current Issues Regarding Refugees

In 2022, North Korea instigated a series of attacks on South Korea, utilizing military technology banned by international treaty. With aid from its allies, South Korea resisted and the dispute reached a swift end. However, refugees that were settled in Australia, Canada, and the United States of America were largely unable to repatriate due to the unlivable conditions the conflict left upon the targeted cities. While the South Korean refugees have adapted well, North Korean refugees face difficulties acclimating to Western culture and have been subject to humiliation, criticism, and discrimination. This has called into question the future economic benefits refugees may bring and the cost to do so.

As mentioned previously, many refugees had been resettled in developing nations. Language and cultural differences pose a significant challenge and have largely inhibited the assimilation of refugees into society. Allocating resources to the refugees remains challenging, as some of the citizens are necessitous, so that prioritizing the refugees would incite tension. However, the monetary incentive provided by more developed nations remains strong and the international community largely overlooks the poor conditions.

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Setting the Scene: February 9, 2025

Since 2023, the Liberal-National Coalition has maintained control of the Australian Government.

As a conservative, right-wing political party, the Coalition supports free-market operations. In contrast with the Australian Labor Party, which has evolved in platform over the years, the Liberal-National Coalition has continued to advocate for its pro-business policies. Broadly, supporters include those in business, industry, and agriculture.

Prime Minister Michaela Cash has carefully selected her Cabinet members for advice on domestic issues. Each Cabinet member has expertise in his or her ministry, but is actively involved in advising the Prime Minister. In order to discuss the issue of the refugee crisis, the following ministers are in attendance:

1. Michaela Cash (Liberals), Prime Minister / Leader of the Liberal Party

Michaela Cash draws from a wide range of experience in industrial and employment law and various Committee appointments as a Senator. She has a hard-line stance on migration in order to protect Australia, claiming that migrants often bring unfavorable beliefs that must be corrected. She is reluctant to address migrant communities' mental health, domestic violence, and economic issues. In general, she has voted against refugee and protection conventions, despite international agreements.

2. Andrew Broad (Nationals), Deputy Prime Minister / Minister for Foreign Affairs / Leader of the National Party

Andrew Broad has strong ties to the agricultural and small business industries. He is very eager to make policy in the aforementioned area, but also focuses on family relations and resource distribution in the political arena. He believes that the concentration of wealth is shifting from Europe and USA to the Asia Pacific region. He acknowledges the contribution of foreigners in the Australian economy, but feels that no special concessions be granted. Broadly, he agrees with legal means of asylum-seeking in small numbers that can provide a return to the Australian economy.

3. George Christensen (Nationals), Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

George Christensen is one of the most outspoken members of this committee--he is strongly opinionated and has, in the past, made statements critical of Islam and promoted the re-introduction of capital punishment. He believes that individuals who act in a way that is contrary to the values of Australia should have their citizenship stripped and be deported. He strongly condemned accepting refugees, particularly from Syria and Iran.

4. David Coleman (Liberals), Minister for Employment

David Coleman has extensive experience working in the business, consulting, and media industries. Through his work and political roles, he has seen the positive economic impact migrants can have on the Australian economy and community. However, he tends to favor non-asylum-seeking migrants, as they already have the means to be productive members in society.

5. Kelly O'Dwyer (Liberals), Minister for Women

Kelly O'Dwyer has been a long-time member of the Liberal leadership in the Government. Initially serving in roles related to finance and economics, she has expanded into social ventures, most involved in the advancement of women. She has little opinion on accepting asylum-seeker in and of itself, but is more concerned with the impact it will have on other aspects of Australia.

6. Christian Porter (Liberals), Attorney General

A lawyer by trade, Christian Porter began his career in commercial litigation, later moving to public practice. He became increasingly involved with work with the Commonwealth and later took roles in politics, serving on previous Cabinets. He takes pride in having a large amount of interaction with his constituents and responding to their needs.

7. Mathias Cormann (Liberals), Minister for Education and Training

Upon first visiting Australia in 1994, Mathias Cormann decided to pack his bags and permanently move to Australia. He understands the draw of Australia and is very familiar with the challenge to adapt to a new culture, having only learned to speak English at age 23. Cormann aims to build up the legal pathways to migration and incentivize the legal pathway.

8. Tim Wilson (Liberals), Minister for Indigenous Affairs

As a past policy director for the Institute of Public Affairs, Tim Wilson emphasizes a limited government. Though while in the aforementioned role he had criticized the Human Rights Commission, he later served as the Commissioner, resigning only to pursue a political career. Wilson believes in universal, individual human rights, but has focused primarily on indigenous Australians. Regarding Australian citizens, he is a long-time promoter of religious freedom and same-sex marriage.

9. Tony Pasin (Liberals), Minister for Social Services

Tony Pasin largely focuses on development in South Australia and works to combat the rising cost of living and challenges in accessing quality healthcare, jobs, and education. His policies face inwards, and he has little interaction with migrants. Broadly, it appears that he is reluctant to support refugees due to the negative economic impact they can have. However, he is extremely wary of party and public whims and takes care not to tread on either.

10. Josh Frydenberg (Liberals), Minister for Revenue and Financial Services

Josh Frydenberg has had an illustrious beginning to his career-honors degrees in college that led him to work at a large commercial law firm, followed by higher education at Oxford and Harvard. Although he was raised with privilege and advantage that many asylum-seekers can only dream about, he actively engages with the community. In the past, he has assisted the print handicapped and the intellectually disabled. Frydenberg strongly believes in the contribution of migrants, fueled by his Jewish ancestors' migration from Nazi-controlled Europe. However, he is also a proponent of a small government.

11. Steven Ciobo (Liberals), Minister for Trade and Investment

Steven Ciobo places great importance on tourism, and has, in his career, pushed for means to increase domestic spending by foreigners. Later appointed the Minister for International Development and the Pacific, he has also had to deal directly with the issue of asylum-seekers.

Ciobo has issued public statements against people smuggling and is generally in support of the Coalition Government's policies. At the same time, he harbors sentiments that Australian citizens should support the values of Australia and is in support of stripping the citizenship of any who behave otherwise.

12. Peter Dutton (Liberals), Minister for Defence

Peter Dutton, before turning to politics, worked as a police officer and businessman. He notably is responsible for the Coalition's mental health policy and various healthcare reforms. In his previous position as Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, he has had to provide Australia's public response to criticism over human rights violations in the overseas detention centers. He strongly believes that an immense amount of resources will be lost in rehabilitating refugees and that they will be a drain upon society. As follows, Dutton believes Australia should extricate itself from promises to aid refugees.

13. Zed Seselja (Liberals), Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

Both parents of Zed Seselja were immigrants from Croatia; they held two jobs each to make ends meet. Taking his work ethic from his parents, Zed Seselja worked a number of odd jobs while in university. He later entered into politics and has been involved with migrant affairs, particularly with regard to the humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support programs. One of the major outcomes of these programs is to improve the social and economic wellbeing of the humanitarian entrants. In general, however, he agrees with the Coalition position as "there is nothing humane about policies that give people smugglers an incentive to take advantage of vulnerable people."

14. Simon Birmingham (Liberals), Minister for Finance

With ties to the tourism and hospitality industry, Simon Birmingham knows how to cater to visitors. His former role as Minister for Education and Training, however, placed him in an unfamiliar role, where he navigated maintaining quality, accessible education in Australia. While his voting record as a whole is not inspiring for refugees, during his appointment \$14.5 million was invested to help refugees learn English and offer Temporary Protection Visas to enroll in the Adult Migrant English Program.

15. Stuart Robert (Liberals), Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Overcoming controversy in 2016 surrounding his international travel, Stuart Robert returned to politics in 2021, having taught at a university in the interim. He has worked in refugee camps in Africa in the past; however, the public remains skeptical about his ties to an anti-gay church. Compared to much of the other Liberal party politicians, he has greater support for refugee aid, but not to a significant degree.

16. Scott Ryan (Liberals), Minister for Urban Infrastructure

Scott Ryan has previous experience in business and politics, having worked for GlaxoSmithKline and been a speechwriter. He, like James Paterson, has ties with the Institute of Public Affairs, having been a research fellow. As a whole, he believes in a limited government, but he strongly believes in a just government that follows through on what it has promised. He condemns asylum seeking through illegal means, but is committed to the Government's refugee pathways. Ryan trusts in the Government and is skeptical of criticism from outsiders.

17. Chris Crewther (Liberals), Minister for International Development and the Pacific

Despite his youth, Chris Crewther has valuable experience in economic development and law. He has previously been the CEO of an economic development corporation, an International Lawyer through the UN at the Kosovo Property Agency, and Director at various social and educational organizations. He is passionate about human rights and justice, especially on the global scale. He is one of the few proponents of refugee assistance amongst the Cabinet.

18. James Paterson (Liberals), Minister for Justice

Though James Paterson may be the youngest member of committee, he brings expertise from policy writing at the Institute of Public Affairs, a free market think-tank. He ardently and confidently believes in a limited government that is only responsible to the individuals it governs over. He sees no reason for any benefits given to particular classification of individuals, even in the name of justice--everyone is equal under the law.

19. Andrew Hastie (Liberals), Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism

Andrew Hastie enlisted in the Australian Army following the September 11 attacks in America. He is very passionate about combating terrorism, at times not necessarily with honor and integrity. He has seen first-hand the consequences of war, but feels that they are necessary to resolve conflict. As a result, his policy stances are primarily Australia-centric; he is interested in affordable health care, education, and housing; national security; and small businesses.

20. Matthew Canavan (Nationals), Minister for Small Business

Experienced in the business realm, Matthew Canavan quickly rose to political power as a member of the Turnbull Cabinet. Much of his ideals follow that of the Coalition. Canavan was a major voice in the 2014 Migration Amendment (Protection and Other Measures) Bill that closed loopholes for non-genuine asylum seekers exploiting the independent merit review process, required reliable identification to issue protection visas, and fast-tracked many maritime arrivals' applications.

As one of the above Cabinet members, you are charged with addressing the refugee crisis and appropriately advise the Prime Minister in your area of expertise and responsibility, as accorded by your position. It is important to note that your career depends on the public component of your solutions; in order to retain power, you must garner the support of both the Australian public and the international community.

Some considerations in drafting your recommendations are as follows:

- Are the current refugee quotas appropriate?
- What is your opinion on alternative solutions other countries are implementing in lieu of accepting refugees?
- Should integration into society be a consideration in reviewing refugee applications?
- How effective is international cooperation in deterring illegal means of entry for asylum-seekers?

Valuable resources will include your past speeches and voting record, legislation, Coalition policy, data from the Parliamentary Library, and documents from international organizations.