



Australian Intervention: General Debate

110th Session of IOM Council

Australia thanks the Director General for his report.

Australia is pleased to continue its long-standing commitment to IOM, and we acknowledge the productive visit to Australia recently made by the Director General.

Australia has a long and proud history of orderly migration and refugee resettlement. There are more than 7.3 million migrants living in Australia. About 30 per cent of our population is born overseas. Every single country from around the world is represented in Australia's population¹.

Australia's permanent migration program continues to be generous with a ceiling of 160,000 places set for the financial year 2019-2020. The program is comprised of an approximate two-thirds/one-third split between skilled migrants and those reuniting with family members. Over the past several years, Australia's humanitarian program has progressively increased to 18,750 places, a total increase of nearly 40 per cent.

While welcoming migrants to our country, Australia emphasises the importance of combatting irregular migration, people smuggling and human trafficking. Global irregular migration is at an all-time high. Irregular migration not only compromises border control and management, but adds administrative burden and strain to government systems. In this environment, it is essential that States retain their right to determine border and migration policies.

Also critical is international cooperation to address the complex challenge posed by the increasingly complex movement of people. Australia continues to play an important leadership role in the Asia-Pacific region in combatting irregular migration and people smuggling activities.

Australia co-chairs with Indonesia the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process), leading regional efforts to tackle people smuggling, human trafficking and modern slavery.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics – Migration, Australia, 2017-18
(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3412.0Main%20Features22017-18>)

Within the region, Australia also participates in initiatives arising from the Asian Dialogue on Forced Migration, ASEAN, and the Pacific Islands Forum.

Australia supports IOM's leadership role on migration in the United Nations. We appreciate IOM's ability to develop flexible solutions and support states to manage migration. We welcome IOM's continued recognition that approaches to migration will differ between countries.

Australia encourages IOM to insist on the highest levels of transparency and accountability, both internally and through its external interactions. We also support a focus on strong internal governance within IOM. [*If applicable*: We note that the Director General's proposal to strengthen the senior leadership structure of IOM, to be considered later in this Council session, may assist in this pursuit.]

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Director General's report.