



Australian Government
Department of Immigration and Citizenship

National Security Perspectives of Immigration

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[Slide 1] Introduction

It is my pleasure to be with you here today.

Immigration in context

Last year marked 65 years since the establishment of my department. This presented us with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our history and reflect on the important role the department plays in developing the cultural, social and economic life of our nation.

Since 1945, Australian society has been enriched by the permanent settlement of over seven million people from around the world. As a result, we now live in one of the world's most linguistically, culturally and religiously diverse nations.

While the core of our work has remained constant over our 65 year history, there have also been some dramatic changes in the global setting. These have required quick adaptations to the way we operate. For instance, sixty five years ago, international travel was a leisurely activity largely undertaken by sea. Today, international travel by air and sea has simply become a way of life for many people—travel for tourism, work, for study, seeking a new life, and unfortunately, sometimes for the purpose of committing crimes or acts of violence.

In the 2009–10 financial year, there were over 28 million movements across our borders compared to 26 million in the previous year. By 2020, indications are that these numbers are likely to increase to more than 40 million movements per year.

As border movements have increased, so has the impetus to identify those who travel with the intent of damaging Australia's national interests before they reach our shores.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has always required stringent health and character checks for those wishing to stay in Australia. Over time we increasingly consulted with some members of the security community and began to move towards greater information sharing. However, the attempted bombing of North West Airlines on Christmas Day 2009 demonstrated the need to move quickly to share greater information in our systems with other agencies. The lessons learnt from the attempting

bombing have served to dismantle information silos, in turn facilitating greater intelligence sharing between all agencies.

The challenge my department faces is to effectively balance our responsibility as a nation builder, which is vital to our economic and social prosperity, while preventing the entry of those likely to threaten the national interest.

Within this operational setting, Australia is a signatory to a range of conventions (such as the Chicago Convention 1944) and a number of international human rights treaties (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Refugee Convention). Such conventions place obligations on us to deliver policies which fall within their parameters.

This puts the onus on Government departments and agencies to cleverly develop policies which address both issues without permitting one way of thinking to triumph over the other.

[Slide 2] National security and social policy are complementary, not mutually exclusive

Part of the national security agenda is to ensure that we build a resilient and socially inclusive society where everyone feels a sense of belonging and has the opportunity to fully participate.

Social inclusion is at the core of many of the department's programs. Our immigration, citizenship and settlement policies and programs help strengthen social cohesion and support the successful integration of migrant communities by facilitating equitable economic and social participation.

Experience indicates that programs and policies which assist migrants to engage with their local communities can enable them to participate and settle more effectively.

Marginalisation and isolation undermine opportunities for many people in Australia, and can deprive Australia of the full potential of their contributions to our shared future. More significantly, in extreme forms, this can lead to serious social consequences such as violent conflict or growing support for extremist ideologies.

Countering violent extremism is a key component of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy.

This important work aims to ensure that those in our society most at risk of turning to extremist views are offered alternative pathways. There is clear evidence in both Australia and overseas that those most at risk of extremism are often young and sensitive to perceptions of their social and economic circumstances. However, it is important to note that there is no single pathway to extremism—a combination of different factors can play a contributory role.

To minimise the risk of extremism, we work with our colleagues from other government agencies to provide support to communities, strengthen resilience and provide opportunities for social participation. Programs aimed at social cohesion help bridge the gap between national security priorities and community harmony.

The main challenge of this work is that, in working through a national security framework, we do not inadvertently undermine our nation building efforts by causing fear and resentment. It is about the government and Australian society building trust and ties with our vulnerable communities.

By working to ensure that everyone in Australia can participate in society, access government services and receive government support when needed, the government reduces these risks.

This leads me to the importance of Australian citizenship in building an inclusive nation. Australian citizenship is the most unifying force in our diverse nation. It represents the offer to migrants, and their acceptance, of full and equal membership of Australian society. Citizenship unites all Australians by fostering a shared identity, a common commitment to the principles of parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equality before the law and English as our national language. On Australia Day this year, some 13 000 people from 143 countries became citizens.

[Slide 3] National Security Perspectives of Immigration

Whole-of-Government approach

While my department is closely involved in social policy, we also play a part in managing the border and contribute to meeting many of the key challenges facing Australia. These are clearly articulated in the Australian Government's *Strategic Border Management Plan*.

While border security is an important part of my department's work, it was not originally established as a national security agency. Traditionally this role belonged to a range of agencies including ASIO, ASIS, the Australian Federal Police and the Department of Defence. Nor does my department have responsibility for setting the national security agenda. But we are very much a part of the national security community. This is reflected in our Minister's inclusion in the National Security Committee of Cabinet along with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Treasurer and the Attorney-General.

Our membership of this community enables DIAC to tap into the expertise of other border protection and security agencies to deliver a balanced, whole-of-government approach to border management.

Important partnerships and collaborations underpin the department's border management arrangements. We work closely with other federal agencies, such as the Customs and Border Protection Service, Quarantine, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Infrastructure and Transport to ensure that all stakeholders fully participate in, and contribute to the smooth operation of the border and the ongoing enhancements to border management.

We also work closely with the aviation and maritime sectors, including with industry bodies, individual companies and private suppliers of technology. For example, when Australia was developing its Advance Passenger Processing program (or the APP) it

engaged Qantas, as the national carrier, to be a partner in the trial. This relationship has continued well past implementing the APP. Most recently, QANTAS crew trialled an automated passenger clearance process known as Smartgate using an Australian biometric passport.

This approach also extends to regional and international engagement. For example, through joint participation in international fora such as APEC and the International Air Transport Association Control Authorities Working Group.

In the past, governments may have relied on their own intelligence information. However, today governments think in terms of regional and global security and share information.

One example of this is the Regional Movement Alert System. RMAS is an initiative of the APEC Business Mobility Group, which is chaired by my department. It is a world-first in the real-time verification of passport data in a multilateral environment. RMAS enables Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America to detect the attempted use of lost, stolen and invalid passports. Australia continues to work with other APEC economies as they consider signing up to RMAS.

As we create partnerships with our international counterparts and explore common avenues of concern, we find that the need for international cooperation is increasing. In the future the continued effectiveness of our border security will rely heavily on the strength of our international collaboration.

[Slide 4] A layered approach to border management

Further benefits that can be gained by working with multiple agencies and partners are demonstrated through our layered approach to border management.

The decision made long ago to adopt a universal visa requirement for Australia and develop the electronic visa system, rather than adopting visa waiver programs, provides Australia with a screening mechanism which prevents people identified as posing a security, criminal or health risk travelling to and entering the country. It also provided a platform from which to build a layered approach to border management.

The first layer in our virtual border begins with a person making a visa application. The act of applying for a visa allows an examination of the person, their intent; their previous travel history to Australia; and whether they may pose a risk to the Australian community.

The process for granting a visa for a person to travel relies on intelligence on immigration malpractices identified by the department, as well as collaboration with a range of other government departments, border and national security agencies.

Through this whole-of-government approach, the department places a high degree of focus on pre-clearance of travellers to Australia, checking an individual's bona fides, identity, intent and any character or security issues before they are granted authority to travel. In return, this provides the visa holder with greater certainty that they will be allowed to enter Australia when they reach our physical border.

Visa and pre-clearance in most cases ensures more efficient and faster clearance when travellers arrive in Australia, where Immigration and Customs work jointly to facilitate processing of genuine travellers and detect and prevent unauthorised entry.

Operating ahead of the physical border

The department has representation in a number of countries overseas which facilitates our work ahead of the physical border. Our offshore capability includes liaison, integrity and intelligence specialist officers. We also work joint with regional partners and likeminded countries around the globe.

We have a network of airline liaison officers at key international airports overseas, supporting airlines operating flights to Australia. They in turn are supported through our Border Operations Centre operating around the clock.

The Advance Passenger Processing system I mentioned earlier is integrated with airline flight management systems operates at check-in overseas. It provides definitive instructions to airline staff concerning a passenger's authority to travel to Australia and is backed up by a comprehensive infringement regime.

We have a targeting support unit working with Customs to detect persons of interest *en route* to Australia.

In addition to APP, the department also uses risk-profiling capabilities and continuous checking against the alert list for new information, as well as tools to harness airline information.

On arrival in Australia immigration clearance and referral processing at airports and seaports takes place via Smartgate, which operates under the provisions of our Migration Act.

The Central Movement Alert System, usually referred to as CMAL, is an integral piece of the layered approach. It is a database containing person and document alerts in relation to health, character and national security matters. This system is checked at numerous layers in the traveller pathway, including document alert checks at APP and full person and document alert checks *en route* to Australia. Any passenger identified *en route* can have a recommended referral included in the CMAL record for the attention of primary line officers. The department works closely with ASIO to resolve any issues of potential national security matches.

The layered approach to our borders will improve and strengthen over time with the continued cooperation and collaboration of established and new partnerships.

[Slide 5] Special initiatives

International Capacity Building

Another way in which the department strengthens Australia's border is by building the capacity of countries in the region or in regions of high risk such as the Middle East to manage their borders more effectively.

In the Asia Pacific region, our activities are aimed at developing immigration control and related law enforcement agencies' capabilities in document fraud detection, facial image comparison, fraud investigation and intelligence analysis.

These programs help build our neighbours' capacity to detect and prevent the irregular movement of persons across and within borders. They also build positive engagement at operational and more senior levels to increase my department's and Australia's capacity for influence.

For example, the department has had a visiting immigration intelligence training team working with East Timorese immigration officers since 2003 to improve its understanding of its border. This included the fostering of a real sense of partnership with East Timor in preventing transnational crime in the region.

Specific projects

Our work in the area of national security is very much aligned with the Strategic Border Management Plan and with the Government's National Security Statement¹, launched by former Prime Minister, the Honourable Kevin Rudd MP, in December 2008.

In particular we have been working to fuse national and international capabilities in the priority areas of:

- managing the identity and intent of travellers;
- intelligence and information sharing; and
- unauthorised or irregular movement of people (particularly by air).

Biometrics

New technology, such as the development of biometric technologies, is providing opportunities to enhance our systems in order to better establish identities. Whilst Australia is not a 'leader' in this area, this way forward is seen as a priority by government and we are keen to exploit the advantages of international collaboration and cooperation.

The department is phasing in the use of biometrics in a risk-based, staged approach to improve the identity management of offshore visa applicants wishing to travel to Australia.

This will be achieved in partnership with the UK Border Agency, by utilising the UK's existing network of Visa Application Centres to collect biometric data from visa applicants. The first stage of this program extends to visa applications lodged in 16 countries, managed by ten of our offices across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Under the new arrangements, all people, regardless of nationality, who lodge paper-based visa applications in the selected countries will be required to have their photographs taken and to provide fingerprints as part of their visa applications.

¹ The First National Security Statement to the Parliament: Address by the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, 2008 <<http://pmrudd.archive.dpmc.gov.au/node/5424>>

Again, emphasis is being placed on working with overseas border agencies in the collection and sharing of biometric data, particularly through forums such as the Five Country Conference involving Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

Under the Five Country arrangements, fingerprints are checked across the member countries, with biographic and other selected information only exchanged in the event of a match. Information shared is supplied in accordance with the immigration and privacy laws of the country providing the information, as well as legal arrangements signed by the countries.

We have had some notable successes identifying individuals who were not who they claimed to be or whose history indicated they were known to other border agencies. The client was identified as an Australian citizen who was wanted in Australia to face sexual assault charges. The person was returned to Australia where he was convicted and sentenced to six years imprisonment.

This case highlights the potential for international biometric checking and sharing data matches to detect individuals with criminal records, or who are evading law enforcement.

The use of biometric data in passports has also broadened the ability to process some travellers. The "Smartgate" system, involving automated gates which utilise biometrics, has already been introduced at several Australian airports. These provide faster processing and increased security checking capabilities, matching the biometric data with the travellers.

Next Generation of Border Security

The Australian Government is already looking towards the next generation of border security.

Following the launch of the Government's National Security Statement in 2008, a comprehensive package of measures designed to strengthen Australia's international and domestic aviation security regime was announced by the Australian Government in February 2010. Over four years, \$200 million will be invested on new and improved security technologies, increased policing at airports and enhanced security procedures. All of this will occur in the context of strengthened international cooperation. My department is implementing several of these measures, including the biometrics initiative with the UK I just outlined.

Another of them, which is being jointly implemented by DIAC and ASIO, is the Next Generation Border Security initiative.

This initiative will use advanced data analysis and risk profiling to better identify visa applicants who may present national security risks, enabling my department to refer such applicants to ASIO for assessment. It is a first step in applying modern analytics technology to help develop more sophisticated ways of identifying individuals who present risk among visa applicants and travellers.

The initial focus will be on national security risk. However, over time, Next Generation Border Security will be capable of extension to identify other forms of risk. By itself it is a relatively small project, but it builds on all the previous work my department and other agencies have done to develop the layered approach to border management.

Beyond the Next Generation Border Security, the department expects to add further risk identification tools to detect risks among visa applicants and travellers. This includes a capabilities-like network analysis to detect when new clients have links to previous problem cases or to organisers, and text analysis to analyse the free-text fields in our visa applications. We also expect to continually improve our connectivity to other border, intelligence and law enforcement agencies, so that the value of the information we collect from visa applicants and travellers can be fully leveraged to Australia's benefit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my department has been an innovator in the creation of strong border controls over the last 65 years. Decisions made with the primary purpose of protecting the integrity of the migration program have all stood the test of recent events well. They have provided a solid base on which to incorporate new approaches, some of which I have outlined for you today.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship takes a very broad interpretation of national security. The security of our nation relies on delivering programs that will create a strong, socially cohesive nation and that reduce the risk of future radicalisation. We will continue to implement effective strategies to engage with the Australian community in order to restore a balanced discourse on migration and counter any rise of extremism.

Our national security role also lies in tapping into the expertise of other agencies. We will continue to work with our international partners, government and industry, to ensure that we can continue to balance the twin challenges of facilitation and enhanced security into the future.

Thank you. I am happy to answer questions you may have.