

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/163) PROGRAMME – Operation Sovereign Borders

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

Please provide an update on the Bali Process.

- a. What other progress has been made in the region that has strengthened regional borders?
- b. Are any other countries investing in this regional strategy?
- c. How does Australia's contribution compare to our regional neighbours?

Answer:

- a. Considerable progress has been made in strengthening regional borders with increased cooperation between regional countries under a range of bilateral and multilateral forums including the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). In addition, many regional countries have, in partnership with Australia, undertaken joint operations and capacity building initiatives, introduced or enhanced relevant legislation and developed information sharing arrangements.

The Bali Process has initiated a number of recent activities including workshops on airport security and identity verification. Complementing this work, the Regional Support Office (RSO) of the Bali Process has initiated a number of projects, including development of policy guides on criminalising migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons and roundtables on the development of a regional training curriculum for frontline border officers, regional biometric data sharing initiative and migration and transnational crime.

- b. Many countries in the region participate in initiatives to strengthen their borders, promote lawful movement and engage with regional partners, including the through the processes cited above. The "Bali Process Strategy for Cooperation: 2014 and beyond" was endorsed at the 28th Bali Process Steering Committee meeting in August 2014. The strategy sets out a forward work programme for the Bali Process that recognises the importance of addressing irregular movements of people within the region, and the need for harmonised arrangements and common responses.

- c. Australia is well placed to share best practice and provide technical assistance in the area of border management through strategic partnerships with countries in our region. Over many years the portfolio has made strong investments in a regional programme of capacity building which includes a focus on strengthening border management, through initiatives such as technical skills training, joint operational exercises, systems enhancements and sharing of information and expertise.