



20. Delivering stronger borders and a more secure nation

Putting the national interest first

The Coalition will put the national interest first, deliver stronger borders, provide a world-class defence force and protect the nation's interests overseas.

We will take immediate action to protect both the integrity of our borders and Australia's immigration programme. We will not allow illegal boat arrivals and people smugglers to either determine Australia's immigration programme, or undermine the Australian people's confidence in the programme.

Delivering stronger borders – where the boats are stopped

We will deliver stronger borders – where the boats are stopped – with tough and proven measures.

- If elected Prime Minister, the first overseas trip that Tony Abbott makes as Prime Minister will be to Indonesia to renew cooperation against people smugglers.
- We will re-introduce the use of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) to deny the people smugglers a product to sell.
- We will immediately give new orders to the Navy to tackle illegal boat arrivals and 'turn back' the boats where safe to do so.
- We will give priority in processing to offshore special humanitarian visa applicants, over illegal boat arrivals.
- We will ensure, offshore special humanitarian visa applicants receive priority in obtaining permanent residency in Australia over illegal boat arrivals.

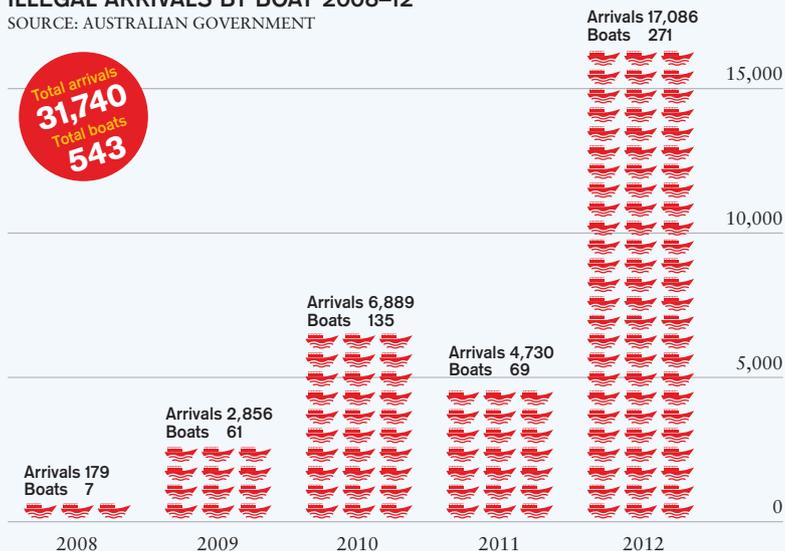
- We will boost rigorous offshore processing for illegal arrivals so that bad behaviour has consequences.
- We will establish presumption against refugee status for people who arrive on boats without identity papers.
- Where asylum seekers deliberately discard their identity documentation, we will deny them the benefit of doubt when determining their refugee status.
- We will establish and increase mandatory minimum jail sentences for people smugglers.
- We will reserve 11,000 of the 13,750 refugee places each year for offshore applicants.

POLICY PRIORITY

We will deliver stronger borders – where the boats are stopped – with tough and proven measures.

ILLEGAL ARRIVALS BY BOAT 2008–12

SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT



“Stopping the boats matters. It would signify that the Australian government is in every respect sovereign over Australia’s borders.”

Tony Abbott
April 2012

- We will ensure a minimum of 1,000 refugee places are reserved for the most vulnerable refugees, in particular women at risk of violence and harm.
- We will restore the single case officer appeal process.

Delivering a world-class defence force

We will rebuild our defence force by stopping Labor’s defence run-down and give our defence force the first-class resources and equipment they need.

- We will restore responsible defence spending to 3 per cent real growth per year subject to improvements in the Budget – our aspiration is to restore funding to defence to the same level as it was under the last seven years of the Howard Government
- We will reinvest any responsible savings that can be found in the defence bureaucracy in greater military capacity.
- We will immediately start the process of acquiring a number of new state-of-the-art unmanned aircraft.
- Within 18 months, we will publish a new defence White Paper with costed, affordable ways to meet Australia’s important defence and national security objectives.
- We will ensure that Australia does not have a submarine capability gap. Within 18 months, we will make the short and medium term decisions necessary to achieve this goal.

Fighting terrorism in Australia

We will deliver improved counter-terrorism and domestic security measures in Australia and secure our ports and airports.

Improving foreign affairs – a stronger focus on our region

We will increase the importance of foreign affairs, place a stronger focus on our region and rebuild our diplomatic footprint with more effective representation and better diplomacy. We will enhance Australia’s role and engagement in the world developing greater international cooperation.

- We will review the weighting Australia gives to its diplomatic resources including overseas representation, with a view to refocusing foreign policy on the Asia-Pacific region.
- We will rebuild relationships with our neighbours damaged by Labor’s mismanagement and failed border security policies.
- We will enhance US access to bases in Australia and continue to support our close alliance with the US.
- We will ensure future aid funding increases are dependent on AusAid meeting strict performance benchmarks.
- Within two years, we will establish a new two-way ‘Colombo Plan’ to deepen our knowledge and engagement with countries in our region and develop stronger people-to-people relationships by bringing the best and the brightest talent from our region to Australia and taking Australia’s best and brightest talent to countries in our region.