



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 26 July 2010

A Better Migration Program is Not Built on Empty Promises and Hollow Threats

As politicians sharpen their focus on refugees in boats and arbitrary caps and targets designed for short term political gain, Australia's migration program remains unbalanced, mismanaged and confusing for current and potential migrants and sponsors and for the general public.

The true migration issues that need to be dealt with are about skills shortages and Australia's reputation abroad, but Government and the Opposition remain locked in an absurd and short-sighted contest to see who can have the fewest boat arrivals and the smallest migration program.

The Migration Institute of Australia (MIA) urges all politicians to leave aside their tired talking points and address this essential issue with honesty, clarity and good faith.

Hundreds of thousands of migrants and potential migrants have been negatively affected by the oscillating, overcooked changes to Australia's migration program over the past six months, only to face an election campaign that threatens further cuts and besmirches the positive social and economic roles they play in communities across Australia.

"It should not be too much to ask for our leading politicians to acknowledge that any migration policy must meet skills needs, value family unification and honour international humanitarian obligations," said MIA CEO Maurene Horder. "To claim otherwise fundamentally misleads the voting public."

The Migration Program is complex and has a wide-ranging effect across public policy, so treating it with care and diligence requires a political cooperation that is undermined by the distracting and dispiriting political debate on refugee arrivals.

"The real issues facing Australian migration concern the skills and people we need for growth and prosperity, especially as our humanitarian intake represents a tiny fraction of the overall Migration Program," Horder said. "Politicians should resist emotional language in conversations about refugees and make it clear that, regardless of method of arrival or country of origin, it is not illegal to come to Australia in search of humanitarian entry."

Available for Interview

Maurene Horder
Chief Executive Officer
Migration Institute of Australia
www.mia.org.au

Contact

Brian Duff
Communications Manager
0432 937 862
brian.duff@mia.org.au

Migration Institute of Australia

ABN 83 003 409 390
Level 3, 83 York St, Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: +612 9279 3140 Fax: +612 9279 3172
info@mia.org.au www.mia.org.au