



Australian Government
**Australian Customs and
Border Protection Service**

MINUTE PAPER

Central Office

National Director, Law Enforcement Strategy Division

People Smuggling: New Direction in Strategic Communications

CONTEXT

Our structured counter-people smuggling communications campaigns in Sri Lanka and Pakistan are coming to a close. Rather than continuing with formally structured public advertising campaigns in these countries, a new direction for strategic communications is proposed.

What we have learnt to date about Potential Irregular Immigrant (PII) decision-making and information consumption suggests that our target audience learns about people smuggling issues extremely efficiently, regardless of our marketing. We have identified the press and radio channels accessed by PIIs in specific locations, and we know the feed from the Australian diaspora is very important. We also know that PIIs are very savvy in their understanding and interpretation of Australian Government policy trends and messaging.

In this context, the more formal and overt communication modalities we have been using, while serving to raise visibility of the issue, can be interpreted by the target as propaganda. This leads some PIIs to simply dismiss our messaging, or at least to take it with a grain of salt. [They may also take counter-productive lessons... 'make sure we get seaworthy boats.'](#) A desensitisation effect is likely to grow if we continue with our saturation public advertising approach. In sum, 'more of the same' is considered a low-return option for achieving our strategic communications objectives [and, based on recent research from Sri Lanka, may even be counter-productive.](#)

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POSITION:	Director People Smuggling Policy & Strategy
DOC DATE:	2 September 2010