



29 July 2013

Statement by Mr Greg Wilcock, Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh

If you come to Australia by boat without a visa you won't be settled in Australia

As of Friday 19 July asylum seekers who come to Australia by boat without a visa will never be settled in Australia.

Australia is sending this message to all who would consider purchasing a dangerous boat journey to Australia from a people smuggler.

Under a new arrangement signed by Australia and Papua New Guinea on 19 July – the Regional Settlement Arrangement – asylum seekers who come to Australia by boat without a visa will be sent to Papua New Guinea for assessment.

If found to be a refugee then they will be settled in Papua New Guinea.

Australia has had enough of seeing people drowning in the waters to Australia's north.

Australia has had enough of people smugglers exploiting asylum seekers and seeing them drown on the high seas.

Processing arrangements in Papua New Guinea will be significantly expanded and people will be sent there as soon as health checks are complete and appropriate accommodation is identified.

The governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea will expand existing facilities as well as establish further facilities in Papua New Guinea.

The two governments will also support settlement services for those with refugee status, as safe and appropriate accommodation and services are identified.

There is no cap on the number of people who can be transferred to Papua New Guinea.

Australia is a compassionate nation and will continue to deliver a strong humanitarian program.

There is nothing compassionate about criminal operations which see children and families drowning at sea.

Access to Australia's humanitarian program must be through the international organisations which resettle people around the world, not through criminal operators who have pushed people onto unseaworthy vessels with tragic consequences.

The new arrangements will allow Australia to help more people who are genuinely in need and help prevent people smugglers from abusing Australia's system.