



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Minister for Immigration and Border Protection

MEDIA STATEMENT

Thursday 6 February 2014

**REGIONAL COOPERATION STRENGTHENED - GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES
INTENTION TO HANDOVER PATROL VESSELS TO MALAYSIA**

Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Scott Morrison, announced today the Australian Government has the intention to handover two retired Australian Customs and Border Protection *Bay* Class vessels to Malaysia by mid-2015 to assist in countering maritime people smuggling in the region.

“Australia and Malaysia have cooperated closely to combat people smuggling. Providing two *Bay* Class vessels to our valued partners is a practical operational strategy to stem this criminal trade,” Minister Morrison said.

“Malaysia is a key partner in regional and bilateral efforts against people smuggling, particularly important due to its ongoing use as a transit country for people seeking to reach Australia by boat.

“Australia will provide vessel training, which will involve Australian Customs and Border Protection Service officers assisting in the development of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency’s existing maritime capability.

“The *Bay* Class vessels have a range of 1000 nautical miles at 20 knots, are crewed by 12 officers, and equipped with two response tenders capable of being launched from a moving vessel in most sea states.

“The vessels have been well maintained and continue to be highly agile and responsive during operations and will complement the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency’s current maritime fleet.

“These vessels will offer enhanced search and rescue and interception capacity to the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency’s border protection operations. This will improve Malaysia’s capability to preserve life at sea while shutting down people smuggling syndicates.

“The Coalition Government’s regional deterrence framework under Operation Sovereign Borders is enhancing regional cooperation to combat people smuggling.

“Today’s announcement builds on a November agreement secured between the Malaysian and Australian Governments to put in place targeted operations to further disrupt and prevent the movement of people into and through Malaysia by air, by land and by sea.

“The response from Malaysia in combatting people smuggling has been outstanding and the Australian Government appreciates their strong cooperation,” Minister Morrison said.

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