



**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**TO**

**THE REPORT OF**

**THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

**ON**

***BOSNIA: AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE***

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO  
THE REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
DEFENCE AND TRADE

BOSNIA: AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE

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## Introduction

The Government wishes to express its appreciation to the members of the Joint Standing Committee for their work in reviewing Australia's response to the situation in the former Yugoslavia.

The Committee's report deals comprehensively with a wide range of complex issues which traverse the responsibilities of several Federal and State Government Ministers and affect many members of the community. It will provide a valuable resource for informing policy debate and development.

## Chapter One - Ethnic Cleansing and the Plight of Refugees

### No Recommendations

## Chapter Two - The Role of the United Nations

### Recommendation One

*In order to ensure that Australia plays its full part in the reconstruction of Bosnia, the Australian Government offer a police contingent to the Implementation Force (IFOR) and respond positively to a request for a contribution to the peacekeeping requirements or for assistance in the reconstruction of Bosnia.*

### Response

The Government considered a request to provide a police contingent for Bosnia but, after careful consideration, declined that request.

## Comment

The Government regards the issues arising from the break-up of the former Yugoslavia as ones to be addressed primarily by the major world powers and European countries generally, in cooperation with the United Nations.

In conformity with long-standing bi-partisan policy not to participate directly in multilateral military or related operations in the former Yugoslavia, Australia decided not to contribute to the United Nations International Police Task Force operating in Bosnia or the United Nations International Transitional Police Force in Eastern Slavonia.

The Government places a high priority on maintaining its support for the United Nations, particularly in participation in peace operations. Requests for participation in such operations are considered on a case by case basis taking into account our standard criteria, which include, amongst others, whether the operation has a clear and achievable mandate, clear and achievable goals and clearly defined termination or review points; whether there is a prospect for a satisfactory outcome given the UN resource commitment and the political nature of the situation; and how much Australian interests are engaged including regional, alliance and humanitarian interests and community attitudes.

Australia was not invited to participate in the NATO-led Implementation Force - IFOR.

Following a request from the United Kingdom, the Government has approved the deployment of six Australian Defence Force (ADF) officers to serve with the British forces in the former Yugoslavia for three rotations of six months from February 1997. The officers will fill key staff positions in both the British Sector Headquarters in Bosnia and the Force Logistics Headquarters in Croatia where they will support senior commanders and their staff. ADF personnel on exchange postings with NATO units have been deployed on duties involving the former Yugoslavia since 1994.

In otherwise providing strong support for the peace process, Australia has made a significant contribution to humanitarian and other assistance to the people of the former Yugoslavia. Since 1991, we have contributed assistance worth some \$9.5 million, largely through multilateral agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross; supported the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal; and issued some 20,000 visas for resettlement in Australia. In addition, individual Australians have made independent contributions to the peace process in the former Yugoslavia.

## Chapter Three - The Provision of Humanitarian Aid

### Recommendation Two

#### *The Australian Government:*

*make a significant contribution to the international reconstruction effort in the former Yugoslavia; and*

*exert pressure on the international community to maintain the momentum of relief operations after the cessation of hostilities, by giving priority and firm commitment to the restoration of civilian populations and infrastructure devastated by years of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia.*

### Response

The Government will keep under examination the question of further assistance to the war-affected peoples of the former Yugoslavia and will continue its support for the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, while recognising that these are matters of primary concern to the major global powers and the countries of Europe.

### Comment

The international community, through the World Bank and other agencies, is actively involved in assessing Bosnia and Herzegovina's needs and developing a plan for reconstruction. It has been estimated that \$US5.1 billion will be required over the next three to four years to rehabilitate essential physical infrastructure, as well as to reconstruct schools and hospitals and to provide social support and demobilisation services. A donors' pledging conference, held in Brussels in April 1996, saw the target reached of some \$US1.8 billion for 1996.

Since the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID appeared before the Committee in November 1995, the Australian Government has provided a further \$1.75 million in humanitarian assistance for the winter appeal issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the human rights field operation of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights. These contributions brought total humanitarian assistance to over \$5 million in 1995/96 financial year and were consistent with the approach hitherto taken to help meet immediate humanitarian needs and to support international agencies in providing non-discriminatory aid.

Given the scale of needs, Australia cannot play a prominent role in the reconstruction effort. Australia has allocated \$1 million for the former Yugoslavia in 1996/97. The reduction in allocation, compared to the previous year, reflects the Government's current budgetary constraints and the large demands for emergency humanitarian assistance in other parts of the world including Zaire, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Australia's contribution will be provided to meet the continuing humanitarian needs in the region and to provide support for reconstruction efforts, particularly in areas where Australia has particular expertise, such as, involvement with institution building in the fields of human rights and democratic elections.

The need for humanitarian assistance will continue in parallel with the reintegration and repatriation program. The three million refugees, displaced persons and other war-affected

people across the region will be dependent for some time on international assistance. The situation of refugees and displaced persons affects not only Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Slovenia. A regional and even-handed approach to providing humanitarian assistance will continue to be necessary, and sympathetic consideration will be given to channelling any further Australian assistance through international agencies.

### **Recommendation Three**

*In determining the placement of humanitarian entrants from the former Yugoslavia, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs give priority to settlement in locations which minimise the adjustment problems of the new settlers and ensure access to all necessary support services.*

### **Response**

Accept in principle.

### **Comment**

The Government has provided an additional \$20 million over four years for settlement services. Consideration is being given to using some of this funding for developing an integrated humanitarian settlement strategy. The strategy will provide a more holistic approach to humanitarian settlement, building on partnerships with other service providers.

The Government makes every effort to minimise the difficulties associated with settlement of humanitarian entrants, and notes that humanitarian entrants fall into two groups: (a) those with relatively well established proposers in Australia (some Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) entrants and all Special Assistance Category (SAC); and (b) those with limited links with Australia (refugees and the remainder of the SHP entrants).

(a) With some exceptions, the Government does not participate directly in the settlement of entrants who are proposed by family or friends who are primarily responsible for their accommodation and settlement. However, through the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, the Government does assist indirectly in their settlement through the funding of Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and Grants-in-Aid (GIA). Concessional entry of people in these categories depends on the availability in Australia of support from their proposers.

Information on settlement and community services is available from GIA workers, many of them based at MRCs. Some MRCs run information sessions for new arrivals. Others are training bi-cultural workers to run information sessions within their own communities.

(b) In determining the placement of those humanitarian entrants with limited links to Australia, overseas officers of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs take into account: the presence of relatives or friends living in a particular place; the availability of On Arrival Accommodation (OAA); and need for the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme (CRSS) support.

OAA is made available to those refugee and SHP entrants who have no other accommodation available. It is located in proximity to support services. OAA residents' needs for specific

services such as health services, including torture/trauma counselling, are assessed and residents are linked to appropriate service providers.

Priority for CRSS placement is accorded to those who:

- . do not have any links in Australia;
- . have links in Australia with people who have been here for fewer than two years;
- . do not have an established ethnic community in Australia;
- . have experienced torture or trauma;
- . are in the "Woman at Risk" category.

When CRSS groups are available and suitably located (eg families from tropical areas would not normally be sent to the colder areas of Australia), they link entrants to necessary support services.

#### **Recommendation Four**

*The Department of Employment, Education and Training, in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the State and Territory Departments of Education, investigate the levels of tension and hostility in Australian schools between children of communities involved in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and recommend strategies to minimise the problem through appropriate programs.*

#### **Response**

Accept in principle.

#### **Comment**

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs is currently giving consideration to this issue in cooperation with the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and relevant Non-Government Organisations and community-based agencies.

The Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research has commissioned a project entitled *Immigration and Schooling: Case Studies of Australian Schools and their Localities*. This project will include a chapter on racism in schools.

The Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs funds a *School Language Program* to assist schools and community groups to maintain the languages and cultures of students of non-English backgrounds and increase all students' awareness of the languages and cultures in the Australian community.

In a further initiative to assist migrant (as well as indigenous) children, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, comprising all Ministers responsible for education, established a Taskforce in December 1995 to consider strategies to reduce racism in schools. The Taskforce will run for two years and will implement a comprehensive national database on policies, effective practice and resources relating to racism, racial discrimination and harassment in schools.

The Government has allocated funding for a campaign to combat racist attitudes and behaviour which will be implemented in schools, workplaces, sporting organisations and other sections of the community. Funding of \$5 million has been allocated in 1996/97. The Campaign is being planned according to a 2 year strategy. Additional funding to build on the momentum of activities commenced this financial year will be considered in the context of the 1997/98 Budget.

#### **Recommendation Five**

*The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in conjunction with relevant State Government authorities develop a package of information detailing the full range of services available to refugees including health, education and language services, employment services and unemployment benefits, child care facilities, trauma counselling and legal advice regarding war crimes. This package should be distributed to refugees on arrival as well as to sponsoring families, mainstream charities, ethnic community organisations and trauma counselling services*

#### **Response**

Accept in part.

#### **Comment**

The Government considers that the provision of timely and accurate information to assist migrants to settle in Australia is a shared responsibility of Commonwealth, State and Local Governments. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs currently provides settlement information to all migrants by means of pre-embarkation publications and on-arrival information kits. These publications and kits outline the services provided by government and non-government agencies which can assist migrants in their settlement. The on-arrival kits provide information specific to the State or Territory in which the migrants are settling. Information contained in these information publications and kits are continually being revised to reflect changes in Government policies and programs. A revised tailored version of the pre-embarkation information is being produced for Humanitarian Program entrants.

In addition, a Settlement Checklist is provided to all humanitarian entrants at both the pre-embarkation and on-arrival stages of the migration process. The Settlement Checklist outlines what services are available to the humanitarian entrant, when and how they should be accessed. Topics covered include employment, learning English, health care, financial assistance, housing, education, taxation, customs and quarantine regulations. The Settlement Checklist is also available in Bosnian. A separate set of Settlement Guidelines is produced for the individuals or groups providing on-arrival settlement assistance for the entrant.

The Government does not propose to incorporate legal advice on war crimes in the on-arrival information package. The inclusion of legal advice regarding war criminals in on-arrival information could create a false impression that there is a significant war criminal presence in Australia. This could have a traumatic impact on some refugees arriving in Australia.

The Government acknowledges the concerns of the Committee which led to the recommendation to include legal advice on war crimes in the information package for refugees, and has disseminated information to relevant community groups and service organisations on the avenues open to individuals to report sightings of war criminals. Government officers are meeting with community organisations and service providers, to

provide advice on the procedures, and to act as contact points for members of the community wishing to report sightings. The level of substantive reports of sightings to date has been low.

The efficiency of the post-arrival reporting procedures already in place will be kept under review.

### **Recommendation Six**

*Better access for refugees to health, education and other services be made an agenda item at meetings between relevant State and Federal Ministers and officials; and*

*in particular, the provision of adequate access to dental services be made an urgent priority*

### **Response**

Accept.

### **Comment**

The Government proposes to take this recommendation up through the relevant forums, acknowledging the range of initiatives undertaken by Commonwealth and State Government agencies, for example the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs' *Migrant Service Improvement Strategy* and the Department of Social Security's Migrant Liaison Officer program, and interpreting services and drawing particular attention to case coordination as a model for providing better access for refugees to health, education and other services.

Case coordination seeks to improve access for refugees in on-arrival accommodation to health, education and other services through individual assessments which indicate areas where specific assistance and support are required. Agencies involved in case coordination include centres for survivors of torture and trauma and Migrant Resource Centres.

The Government notes that the *Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma* and various State and Territory services' initiatives have been designed to improve refugees' access to services.

### ***Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma***

The *Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma* is a Commonwealth Government initiative to help provide counselling and advocacy for migrants and refugees who suffered torture and other trauma before coming to Australia.

From 1994-95 to 1997-98, the Commonwealth Government will provide \$5.2 million to specialist community-based services in each State and Territory. The Program, administered by the Department of Health and Family Services, acknowledges the growing proportion of refugees and migrants who have survived torture and/or trauma before coming to Australia.

The program provides, at no cost to the client, initial counselling and advocacy to survivors to help them gain access to mainstream health and other services (including housing, employment and education services if appropriate). Other activities carried out by services include the training of mainstream health service providers in the special needs of survivors and the development of volunteer networks.



The Health Care Card, for which almost all refugees are eligible, provides access to public dental services in all States and Territories. Those refugees requiring emergency dental treatment are generally treated within 24 hours, as are all emergency cases. Those refugees requiring further non-emergency services have been placed on State/Territory waiting lists along with other Health Card holders who require such care.

### **Recommendation Seven**

*The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs be given responsibility to coordinate a committee of all relevant departments and agencies for planning, delivery and monitoring of integrated programs of assistance to refugees and displaced persons, with particular reference to housing, health, employment, social services and education.*

### **Response**

Accept in principle.

### **Comment**

The Government notes that these issues have been addressed over time by an Inter-Departmental Working Group, comprising senior officials of the Commonwealth Departments of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs; Prime Minister and Cabinet; Transport and Regional Development; Attorney-General's; Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs; Industrial Relations; Social Security; Finance; and Health and Family Services. The Inter-Departmental Working Group is a component of the National Integrated Settlement Strategy (the NISS) which was established in 1991/92.

The NISS is a planning framework, which seeks to achieve communication, cooperation and coordination between agencies at all levels of government - Commonwealth, State and local - to improve the provision of services to all migrants (including refugees and humanitarian entrants) and their families. The NISS recognises settlement as a shared responsibility of each of these three levels of government.

An evaluation of NISS, carried out in 1995/96, found that the strategy has been successful in improving the coordination of services to migrants and should continue to be supported, but that more strategic support is required at all levels if NISS's potential benefits are to be realised.

On 20 August 1996 the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs announced the establishment of a Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council (RRAC) which will advise on the appropriateness and adequacy of national settlement services for Humanitarian Program entrants.

Both the NISS and the RRAC will be used in the planning and monitoring of programs of assistance to refugees and displaced persons.

### **Recommendation Eight**

*Statistics showing access to programs by refugees and displaced persons be obtained by the inter-departmental committee on a regular basis from State and Territory authorities providing services to beneficiaries on behalf of the Commonwealth.*

#### **Response**

Accept in principle.

#### **Comment**

A report of Commonwealth expenditure on migrants of non-English speaking backgrounds was prepared in 1995, and is currently being updated. The report disaggregates (where possible) expenditure on services (including mainstream services) to migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds (including refugees and humanitarian entrants). State Government members of the Ministerial Council for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs have agreed to undertake a similar exercise.

However, the Government notes that most mainstream services may collect data on their clients' countries of birth and languages spoken, but not about the status under which a person entered the country. The Government will consult with State and Territory agencies about conducting periodic surveys of services to ascertain if and when refugees are using relevant services.

Basic statistics regarding clients of services for survivors of torture and trauma are collected by those services and reported to the Primary Health Care Group of the Department of Health and Family Services.

### **Recommendation Nine**

*Evaluation of all Commonwealth-funded programs providing support services to refugees and displaced persons be carried out by the respective agencies, and monitored by the inter-departmental committee on a regular basis; and*

*the report of this evaluation be provided to the Parliament through the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.*

#### **Response**

Accept in principle.

#### **Comment**

The Government supports timely evaluation of relevant programs to ensure that they are appropriate, targeted to those in need, and efficiently administered.

The Government notes that an evaluation of case coordination is planned in the latter half of the 1996/97 financial year.

The evaluation of the Department of Social Security's previous Access and Equity Plan confirmed that services provided to enhance migrants' and refugees' access to the Department's programs were well-targeted and effective.

Ongoing evaluations of mainstream programs of the Department of Social Security take account of program outcomes for the Access and Equity target groups, including refugees, but not specifically Bosnians.

**Recommendation Ten**

*The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs consult with ethnic community groups representing the range of humanitarian entrants from the former Yugoslavia, and with the Refugee Council of Australia, in order to:*

*determine whether funds under the Grants-in-Aid program need to be increased in light of the changing nature of the intake; and*

*ensure that equitable benefits for all ethnic groups from the former Yugoslavia are achieved.*

**Response**

Accept in principle.

**Comment**

The Government recognises that determination of community needs is fundamental to the accurate allocation of grants under the Grants-in-Aid program. The changing nature of the intake is taken into account. The effective settlement of Humanitarian Program entrants is a high priority for the Grant-in-Aid program.

The Government notes that the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs is targeting client groups through more rigorous needs-based planning and analysis that will assist delivering a more equitable distribution of resources. Ethnic groups in each State and Territory are consulted on the allocation of grants under the Grant-in-Aid program. The Refugee Council of Australia is being asked to give its views on needs and priorities for the current round and will also be consulted on future rounds.

## Chapter Four - Prospects for Peace

### Recommendation Eleven

*The Australian Government maintain its commitment to the implementation of the human rights aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement and that it urges the implementing parties to ensure adherence to these aspects of the agreement.*

### Response

Accept.

### Comment

The Australian Government will maintain its commitment to the implementation of the human rights provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement by continuing to work for the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of our human rights diplomacy.

With respect to the human rights elements of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Australian Government has provided AUD250,000 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Field Operation in the former Yugoslavia. The Australian contribution will support the work of human rights field officers engaged in monitoring, training and advisory services activities aimed at preventing further human rights violations and building local human rights infrastructure as part of the broader task of democratic development.

Bilaterally, the Government will use all appropriate opportunities to continue to urge the implementing parties to ensure adherence to the human rights aspects of the Agreement, emphasising the necessity of full implementation to securing a just and lasting peace. The Australian Government has consistently raised specific cases of human rights abuse in response to reports by UN bodies and experts as well as respected international human rights organisations. The Government has also publicly condemned violations of human rights and called for appropriate action to be taken against the perpetrators of these violations.

Multilaterally, the Australian Government has been active in supporting the work of relevant UN bodies and inter-governmental agencies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Australian Government will continue to support action in forums, such as the UN Commission for Human Rights, aimed at strengthening compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement's human rights provisions by the implementing parties. (See Recommendation Fourteen)

### Recommendation Twelve

*The Australian Government urge the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to address the grievances of the Albanian people of Kosovo and the minorities Vojvodina and Sanjak in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.*

### Response

Accept.

### Comment

The Australian Government notes with concern continued reports of violations of human rights of the Albanian community in Kosovo, and minority populations in Vojvodina and the Sanjak. Australia has supported resolutions in the UN Commission for Human Rights and the UN General Assembly condemning past violations and calling for the re-establishment of international human rights monitoring missions in the region. The Government will continue to monitor the human rights situation of minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to urge the authorities to ensure that they fully implement their international human rights obligations with respect to minority groups. Australia will continue to make representations on individual cases of human rights violations when it is satisfied that there are valid grounds for enquiry.

### Recommendation Thirteen

*The Australian Government urge the Government of Croatia to ensure that the guarantees of minority rights set down in their constitution are fully implemented in accordance with UN human rights treaties and the Dayton Peace Agreements, particularly with respect to the rights of minorities and returning refugees to citizenship and property.*

### Response

Accept.

### Comment

The Australian Government has made representations to the Croatian Government urging the full implementation of constitutional guarantees for minority rights and the discharge of Croatia's international human rights treaty obligations, in particular those relating to the rights of minorities. With respect to the facilitation of return of refugees and displaced persons and their access to citizenship and property, the Australian Government will continue to urge the Croatian authorities to remove all administrative and other obstacles to the full implementation of the commitments contained in the Dayton Peace Agreement.

### Recommendation Fourteen

*The Australian Government work within the UN to require all authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to provide access as needed to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and representatives of the Commission on Human Rights and of the ICRC; and*

*the Australian Government support the provision of adequate financial and personnel resources, through the UN and other recognised agencies, for the investigation into the disappeared, the inspection of detention camps and alleged grave sites, and the exhumation of bodies.*

### Response

Accept.

## Comment

The Australian Government will continue, wherever possible, to work within the UN system to ensure that the relevant authorities cooperate fully with the UN's human rights bodies and mechanisms. In the Commission on Human Rights (March-April 1996), Australia co-sponsored a resolution which, inter alia, condemned all violations of human rights and international humanitarian law; demanded that all States facilitate the transfer of persons indicted by the International Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia to the custody of the Tribunal; and asked that the parties provide information through the tracing mechanisms of the International Committee of the Red Cross on all persons missing and unaccounted for.

Australia has given significant financial support to the UN's Centre for Human Rights through its contributions to the Voluntary Fund for Technical Assistance. One area of specific Australian support is aimed at assisting the development of national human rights institutions.

### Recommendation Fifteen

*The Australian Government urge the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia and the Government of Bosnia to meet their obligations under the Dayton Agreement to "cooperate fully with the international investigation and prosecution of war crimes" and to surrender suspects in detention whenever the Tribunal requests it.*

## Response

Accept.

## Comment

Australia has fully supported the establishment of the Tribunal by the international community as a means of bringing to justice those persons guilty of committing war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. Australia is committed to providing maximum assistance to the Tribunal, and has argued in the UN General Assembly that the Tribunal needs to be properly resourced to fulfil the task given to it. Australia was one of the first countries to take domestic legislative action in response to the establishment of the Tribunal. The Tribunal has commended Australia for being one of only a handful of countries which has complied with its obligations in this respect.

As indicated in the comment on Recommendation 14 above, the Government will continue to take appropriate opportunities to urge the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet their obligation under the Dayton Agreement to cooperate fully with the Tribunal.

The relevant agencies in Australia have procedures in place to ensure that the opportunities for suspected war criminals to enter Australia are minimised. In addition, the Australian Government has developed a legislative and administrative framework so that appropriate steps can be taken in the event that war criminals are found to be in Australia. The *International War Crimes Tribunals Act 1995* and the *International War Crimes Tribunals (Consequential Amendments) Act 1995* came into effect in August 1995. The Acts provide for various forms of assistance, including the taking of evidence in Australia for Tribunal purposes, the surrendering of suspects in Australia to the Tribunal for trial if the Tribunal so requests, and the conducting of searches in Australia. They also enable the Tribunal to sit in Australia if it so desires.

Measures have also been taken to ensure that the legislation is fully workable. Regulations have been made providing mechanisms necessary for its practical operation and arrangements have been entered into with all States and Territories so that State and Territory magistrates may perform functions under it. Administrative procedures have also been established to ensure that there are clear lines of communication between the relevant agencies in Australia and the Tribunal.

In conclusion, Australia has a comprehensive legislative regime and administrative procedures to prevent the entry of war criminals, to ensure that appropriate steps can be taken if war criminals are found to be in Australia, and to assist the International War Crimes Tribunal. This has involved a significant resource commitment by Australia. Australia takes its obligations in relation to the Tribunal seriously and has been at the forefront of a small group of proactive countries in this regard.

#### **Recommendation Sixteen**

*The Minister responsible for the operation of the International War Crimes Tribunal Act, 1995, the Attorney General and/or the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, report to the Parliament on this matter on an annual basis for the next three years.*

#### **Response**

Accept.

#### **Comment**

The Attorney-General will report to the Parliament on an annual basis for the next three years on the implementation and operation of the *International War Crimes Tribunals Act 1995*.

The annual report will be prepared in consultation with other relevant Ministers, including the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. It is envisaged that the reports will cover such matters as the number of requests for assistance received from the Tribunal, Australia's response to those requests, any problems encountered in the operation of the Act and administrative procedures, and any other relevant issues arising in the course of the reporting period.