

**Country:** Commonwealth of Australia

**Issue:** Regulating Air and Sea Pollution from International Shipping

**Committee:** International Maritime Organization (IMO)

**Issue and Position:** Australia, a nation heavily dependent on maritime trade and surrounded by vast coastlines, acknowledges the pressing global issues of air and sea pollution stemming from international shipping. Australia sees collaboration and stringent measures as imperative to address the immediate and long-term challenges posed by international shipping-related pollution.

**Background Information:** The escalation of international trade and shipping, especially after COVID-19, has led to heightened concerns regarding environmental impact. These concerns emphasize the need for international cooperation to regulate the adverse effects of maritime activities. Ships contribute around 2% of the world's total carbon dioxide emissions and release roughly 10 billion metric tons of polluted water into the oceans yearly. The release of hazardous pollutants like nitrous and sulfur oxides and the improper disposal of oil and sewage from ships directly threaten ocean ecosystems and human health. Australia has taken steps to address maritime pollution, including ratifying MARPOL and adopting emission control areas (ECAs) within its territorial waters. While the IMO and Australia have made strides, including implementing ECAs, cleaner technologies, and waste disposal standards, enforcement remains challenging. The surge in maritime activities post-COVID-19 exacerbates the problems of air pollution and waste dumping. Without proper regulations, the increased shipping could intensify the negative impact on the environment and human health, necessitating immediate and comprehensive responses.

**Proposed Action on the Issue:** To safeguard marine ecosystems and coastal communities, Australia proposes implementing the OCEAN Plan. The "O," known as oversight, focuses on strengthening IMO oversight mechanisms for more effective enforcement by establishing an international monitoring body that enhances transparency and reporting on international shipping and its effects on marine ecosystems. The "C" represents collaboration and compliance, which strives to foster cooperation among other countries by developing a mutual assessment and compliance verification system. "E" focuses on expanding emission control areas (ECAs). Australia will collaborate with other countries and the IMO to broaden the geographical coverage of ECAs to regions with high maritime traffic and implement specific emission standards within designated ECAs to further reduce the risks of international shipping. The "A" stands for adopting sustainable technologies, which encourages using eco-friendly technologies, such as alternative fuels and sustainable waste management. In return for investing in and using cleaner technologies, ships will be incentivized. The "N" focuses on new regulations for cruise ship operations. Due to the substantial contribution to air pollution from cruise ships and ports in major cities like Barcelona and Miami, this plan intends to introduce specific regulations and impose stricter penalties for non-compliance with emission and waste disposal standards. The OCEAN Plan aligns seamlessly with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, promoting clean oceans and the well-being of coastal communities. The OCEAN Plan provides a comprehensive and actionable strategy to address the complex challenges posed by air and sea pollution from international shipping, ensuring a more sustainable maritime future for all nations.

## Works Cited

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