

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Communiqué

The Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (the council) met in Melbourne on 16 July 2010, hosted by the Government of Victoria. The meeting was chaired by the Federal Minister for Immigration and Citizenship and was attended by ministerial representatives from state and territory governments. Western Australia and the Northern Territory provided apologies.

The Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement and Multicultural Affairs, the New Zealand Minister for Ethnic Affairs and the Australian Local Government Association attended the meeting as observers.

In light of the 19-20 April 2010 decision by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to reform ministerial councils, this is expected to be the final meeting of the current Council. The Council acknowledged the good work, collaboration and achievements of the Council and its sub-committees over the decades. Ministers emphasised the importance of senior officials continuing to engage on migration, settlement and multicultural affairs matters.

Key outcomes of the 2010 meeting were:

MIGRATION

The Council noted the importance of immigration in contributing to the growth and quality of Australia's labour force and the challenges and complexities facing governments. The Council welcomed the announcement of the new Minister for Sustainable Population. The Council received an update on the Australian Government's longer term migration planning framework including managing the contribution of temporary entry programs, and the work of the Commonwealth-State Working Party on Skilled Migration and Research Advisory Committee.

Noting the significant economic and social contribution made by international students, the Council welcomed recent work, under the auspices of COAG, on an International Students Strategy for Australia. The Council agreed that the Standing Committee on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (or its successor) will become the governing body for the international student community engagement strategy.

MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SETTLEMENT SERVICES

The Council was pleased to receive a briefing from Mr Andrew Demetriou, Chair of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC), on the policy statement, *The People of Australia*, recently developed by AMAC.

The Council noted the mid-term evaluation of the *National Action Plan to build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*. The council also noted a briefing on current ethnic affairs initiatives in New Zealand.

The Council considered the report of the Working Party on Settlement Issues and noted updates on key settlement programs and targeted initiatives and agreed to facilitate community and local government input in relation to the priority areas identified. The Council also discussed a range of matters including the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), English language proficiency, English as a Second Language (ESL) for children, and language aides.

Melbourne
16 July 2010