



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

**Welcome remarks**  
**APEC Business Mobility Group**  
**Canberra Yacht Club, Canberra**  
**24 January 2007**

**Andrew Metcalfe**  
**Secretary, Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs**

On behalf of the Australian Government, I am pleased to welcome everyone to Canberra.

This gathering is, of course, the first meeting of this group as part of Australia's hosting of the APEC year, which will culminate in the Leaders Meeting in Sydney in September.

The initiatives underway show that the work of the APEC Business Mobility Group (BMG) is beneficial to all APEC economies.

Business mobility is one of the primary mechanisms we have to facilitate business travel and thereby promote trade between APEC economies through the secure movement of business people.

One example of the benefit of this work is the way the BMG is facilitating and promoting secure business travel in the APEC region by assisting member economies to develop Advanced Passenger Information or Advanced Passenger Processing systems.

The BMG has also taken a leading role in promotion of professional standards in the immigration services of member economies. This is something of great interest to me as the Australian immigration service I lead is currently establishing a new culture based on being an open and accountable organisation, having fair and reasonable dealings with clients and having well-trained and supported staff.

I understand one of the key items discussed at the meeting today, under Vince McMahon's capable chairmanship, was the new Regional Movement Alert System.

This is another benefit which grew out of a concept suggested by Chile in 2004 and has since been successfully piloted by Australia, the United States and New Zealand. I am pleased that other economies are now considering joining this system, as this will contribute greatly to our joint ability to prevent the use of lost, stolen or fraudulent passports.

Being certain of a client's identity is particularly important with the increased movement of people and I was pleased to see you also discussed the development of better ways to introduce biometric identifiers into travel documents used in the region.

The APEC Business Travel Card is recognised as one of the most successful initiatives in the whole of APEC, and so I am sure you will have a fruitful discussion about this tomorrow. Business people throughout the region value the card highly, and I am pleased to note that 17 of the 21 APEC economies now participate fully in this scheme.

Australia welcomes the decision by the USA to begin recognising the card for processing priority and we look forward to their full participation and other economies following suit.

All in all, I believe this meeting is a very worthwhile means of facilitating the secure movement of business travellers throughout the region.

It's also a chance to establish strong relationships and networks that will increase cooperation among the APEC economies in the future, and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible tonight.

Thank you.