

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL ON IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Communiqué

The Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (the Council) met in Wellington, New Zealand, on 14 July 2006, hosted by the New Zealand Government. The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, and was attended by ministerial representatives from the State and Territory Governments. The New Zealand Government and the Australian Local Government Association attended the meeting as observers.

Key outcomes of the meeting were:

The Council noted the positive role of migration and multicultural policies by governments to date, in achieving a cohesive society. The Council endorsed general directions being taken by Governments to implement a *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security*. The Plan will be provided to the Council of Australian Governments for consideration.

The Council recognised the valuable contribution refugees and humanitarian entrants have made over the years to the development of modern Australia. The Council had productive discussions on the best ways that the Australian Government and the States and Territories could cooperate to improve provision of settlement services for refugees and humanitarian entrants. Ministers were briefed on Australian Government initiatives in developing a whole of government approach to ensuring that vulnerable refugees and humanitarian entrants had access to all the services of the Australian Government, as well as to those specialised services targeting new refugees. State and Territory Governments noted this approach and committed themselves to continue to develop such whole of government approaches within their own jurisdictions.

The Council noted the critical role of temporary skilled migration in addressing national and regional skill shortages and the importance of further developing measures that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme for employers, enhance the protection of skilled migrant workers and ensure compliance with national and state employment laws.

The Council also received briefings on a large range of other matters. The Council noted with appreciation information on New Zealand initiatives in the areas of immigration, border security and settlement support.

The Council also agreed to support the International Metropolis Conference – with themes of Migration, Economic Growth and Social Cohesion – to be held in Melbourne in October 2007.

Wellington
14 July 2006