

Communiqué

Meeting, Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity

19 May 2017

The Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity (JCCD) met in Sydney on 19 May 2017. The meeting followed a day of speaker presentations from multicultural groups based in West Sydney.

The meeting provided the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the *Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals*, which have been endorsed by the Council of Chief Justices. The Standards were also well received at their virtual launch at the Supreme and Federal Court Judges Conference, and will be promoted at the Council of Australian Tribunals and International Federation of Translators conferences later this year. There will be a formal launch of the Standards, with it being additionally suggested that there be collaboration between each jurisdiction, the interpreting profession, bar associations, law societies and other legal bodies to assist in their ongoing implementation.

The JCCD clarified the scope of the plain English translations project, with it being decided to produce a plain English glossary for all judicial officers. It was suggested that the Aboriginal Interpreter Service could assist in creating plain English translations, and that a survey of select judicial officers could be undertaken to ask which words, phrases and contents should be included. Members noted that the plain English translations need to be further translatable into different languages, and that it would be useful to consult linguists to ensure terms can be translated simply and accurately.

The implementation of the *National framework to improve accessibility to Australian courts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and migrant and refugee women* was also discussed. The Framework will be launched at the next JCCD meeting, which will be a joint meeting with the Cultural Diversity Champions so that Members and Champions may discuss the Framework's implementation. In the meantime, the Framework will be sent to all heads of jurisdiction, Champions, and key individuals and organisations who were consulted in the Framework's development.

Justice Soulio and Ms Dimopolous have taken the lead on the JCCD guidance note on dress and head coverings in court, and the project is progressing.

Projects external to the JCCD were also discussed at the meeting:

- The Law Council's Justice Project: New Arrivals – Mr Parmeter gave an overview of the Justice Project and its terms of reference, membership and methodology. Members provided input on the Project's scope, and on laws and practices that impact disadvantaged cultural groups' capacity for equality before the law.
- The 'best evidence in family violence' project – Magistrate Goldsbrough advised that the project has stalled, although interest remains. Chief Justice Martin will circulate to Members the evaluation outcomes of a WA trial of police use of body-worn cameras for direct evidence.

- Dress and head coverings in court settings - The President of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), Iman Shady, has drafted a 'code of conduct' for Muslims in court. It was agreed that it would be important to make judges aware of the document's existence.
- National bench book on Indigenous issues – Chief Justice Martin has written to the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration to suggest the development of a bench book, and it was agreed that he should continue to pursue this.
- Online Cultural Diversity Training Module – The Judicial Commission of NSW's online cultural diversity training module is expected to be online and ready to use by June.

A number of projects were proposed to be actioned before the next meeting. The Secretariat will:

- Begin producing a community engagement toolkit, and will be the coordination point for compiling a list of judicial officers interested in community engagement.
- Begin compiling existing court user satisfaction surveys, focusing on ATSI and CALD specific questions, and to look at the feasibility of holding a focus group of young adults to assess needs and satisfaction with the courts.
- Begin producing video concepts or scripts to assist the implementation of the National Standards and Framework.

The upcoming rotation of Council membership was discussed, with it being agreed that members from institutions would remain on the JCCD. The Secretariat will take nominations from Members who may be willing to finish their time on the Council at the next rotation.

The next JCCD meeting is planned to be held in Melbourne on 12-13 October 2017, and Champions will be invited to attend.