

Communiqué

Meeting, Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity

19 October 2017

The Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity (JCCD) met in Canberra on 19 October 2017.

The Council discussed status updates on action items from the previous meeting, including:

- The recent COAT Conference - The *Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Australian Courts and Tribunals* were presented at the Conference, and content of the Standards is now being included in the induction for new tribunal staff.
- The 'best evidence in family violence' project – legislation may be introduced in Victoria before police trials with body worn cameras progress in April 2018.
- Proposed national bench book on Indigenous issues – The Australian Institute of Judicial Administration remains committed to the production of a national bench book, and will be seeking funding for this body of work.

Additionally, the final JCCD Guidance Note on dress and head coverings in court is to be distributed to champions along with the Australian National Imam's Council Explanatory Note for Muslims in Court.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for updates on current JCCD projects:

- The Plain English Resource - The focus of the project has shifted from a paper resource to developing a user-friendly app, providing multiple layers of information including definitions, context and audio. The first edition of the app will likely be produced in mid 2018.
- Community Engagement Toolkit - Progress has been made on developing a comprehensive toolkit on community engagement, with the possibility of including a social media component being discussed at the meeting.
- Videos for Judicial Officers on Working with Interpreters – The forward work plan includes work on an explanatory video for court users, and an initial script for a video for judicial officers on working with interpreters in Courts and Tribunals has been developed. It was agreed that the Specialist Committee on the Standards will be approached regarding their ongoing advisory role on the videos and other JCCD projects promoting the Standards.

The Council discussed the importance of the Cultural Diversity Champions in the implementation of the JCCD's key publications. It was agreed that increasing communication with the network of Champions is a priority, and that Champions should have annual face-to-face meetings and a website to communicate effective implementation strategies and share innovative ideas and good practice. Judge Soulio will serve as the inaugural Chair of the Cultural Diversity Champions Network.

As part of the JCCD's future workplan, the Secretariat is to:

- Undertake a literature review on existing resources about cultural consideration in alternative dispute resolution.
- Investigate an approach to enable courts to identify speakers and researchers with expertise in multicultural issues.
- Draft a letter to the Australian Law Reform Commission suggesting they examine the underrepresentation of Indigenous people on juries.
- Convene a small working group, involving the assistance of experts, to develop a draft Guidance Note on managing cases involving modern slavery.

It was also agreed that the JCCD should be consulted on key considerations and gaps in service provisions for CALD fathers, as part of the national strategy being developed by Migration Council Australia around the prevention of family violence through support projects for CALD young men.

The JCCD acknowledged the immense contribution of the Members leaving in the upcoming rotation of the Council's membership to supporting procedural fairness and equality of treatment for all court users, and to promoting public trust and confidence in Australian courts and the judiciary.

The next meeting of the JCCD will occur on 26-27 April in either Melbourne or Adelaide.