

Communiqué

Teleconference Meeting, Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity 27 March 2020

The Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity (JCCD) met via teleconference on 27 March 2020. The meeting afforded an opportunity to follow-up on action items from the previous meeting and to discuss the status of ongoing projects.

The Report developed after the indistinct covert recordings consultations at the previous meeting was discussed, and was generally supported by the members. It was noted that academics at the University of Melbourne will be establishing a research hub to begin a collaborative research program on the issue of indistinct covert recordings, and it was agreed that the JCCD would contact those involved to see what assistance the JCCD may provide.

The Migration Council of Australia is developing a settlement app to help provide information for new arrivals to Australia on immigration and settlement process. The purpose of this app is to create a single resource with comprehensive information on a wide-range of topics related to settling in Australia. Members were briefed on this purpose, and they expressed their support for the project. The Migration Council of Australia offered to share the resources it has developed on legal literacy and access to justice for comment.

The Guidance Note on Modern Slavery has been written, and a working group was formed to look closely at it and report to the JCCD Secretariat their suggestions for change. It was reiterated that the Note is not intended to be a legal document, and it will not be authored by the Council, but simply endorsed by it.

The Covid-19 global pandemic and the changes in court practices necessitated by it were also discussed. It was raised that it may be useful to compile a list of resources to draft a note to alert member communities about the ways that court practices have had to change as a result the social distancing measures enacted around the country. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate the Judicial College of Victoria's "Coronavirus and the Courts" webpage, which lists the changes that have been implemented in each Court in each jurisdiction.

There was also a discussion regarding the some of the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis with relation to visa holders. The key concerns of the Migration Council were outlined as being: access to government services such as Centrelink and Medicare, the impact of travel restrictions on temporary visa holders, and issues relating to insurance for travellers and others without access to Medicare and how hospitals should cost medical services relating to Covid-19.

Members wished Judge Kevin Sleight well in his retirement from the bench.

The JCCD will hold in next meeting via teleconference at a date to be determined.