



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL<sub>ON</sub> CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## **JCCD Meeting Communiqué 19 March 2021 (via Zoom)**

The Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity (JCCD) met in a videoconference via Zoom on 19 March 2021.

The Council was informed about a draft guide for working with interpreters in criminal proceedings which is being developed by Justices Helen Wood and Helen Bowskill. This guide incorporates key aspects of the *Recommended National Standards* and other resources relating to working with interpreters. It is intended to be a companion guide to the *Standards* that would also suit inclusion in a benchbook. It was agreed that the Cultural Diversity Justice Network would be approached to provide feedback on the draft to assist in the continuing development of this guide.

Members were given an overview of the work of the Professional Development Working Groups, which have been formed to provide an industry perspective on the development of professional development course content on the *Standards* and working with interpreters in courts and tribunals. The Working Group of the legal profession, composed of representatives from various law societies and bar associations around the country, has met twice. This Group has expressed its support for the courses and its willingness to participate in their development. A second Working Group, composed of members of the judiciary, is also being formed to discuss the development of course content specific to judicial officers.

The Council was updated by the Secretariat on the review of the *Recommended National Standards*, which was initiated in late 2020. Feedback was received from eleven courts and tribunals and five peak interpreter bodies. The key concerns from the feedback received include: a need for more recommendations for working with interpreters in trials and hearings held by audio/visual link or video/teleconference; and the health and safety of interpreters and other court users. An options paper for proposed changes to the *Standards* has been drafted and is under consideration by the Committee for the *Recommended National Standards*.

Some members expressed concern about the recommendation in the *Standards* that interpreters be designated as 'officers of the court', indicating that they felt that that designation might be presenting an obstacle to some jurisdictions implementing the *Standards* more fully. It was noted that this issue has been discussed by the Committee for the *Standards* and the Committee has agreed to maintain this language in the updated *Standards*.

The Council supported the proposal that it contact the Law Admissions Consultative Committee (LACC) regarding the addition of content on working with interpreters to its Competency Standards for Entry Level Lawyers. The Chair agreed to send LACC and the various admissions authorities around the country letters to this end.

The Secretariat shared a proposal for a new logo for the JCCD with the Members. This proposal was met with enthusiasm and it was agreed that the logo would be changed before the updated *Standards* are published and the professional development modules are published.



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It was proposed that the JCCD hold its next meeting in-person on 11 June 2021 in Canberra, with a videoconference option for those who choose not to travel.