



# Media release

## Senator Chris Evans

Leader of the Government in the Senate  
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

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### Minister announces new immigration advisory council

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, today announced the establishment of the Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution.

The council will provide independent advice on the implementation of measures associated with the government's immigration policy initiatives including *New Directions in Detention* and the national rollout of the Community Status Resolution Service.

"The Government's focus is on resolving the immigration status of people quickly and fairly while ensuring they are treated humanely and with dignity and respect," Senator Evans said.

"The council will provide independent advice on policies, services and programs to achieve timely, fair and effective resolution of immigration status for people seeking asylum or other migration outcomes in Australia.

"The terms of reference and membership of the council reflects the range of expertise required to implement the Government's *New Directions in Detention* policy."

The council, which succeeds the Immigration Detention Advisory Group (IDAG), will meet for the first time on October 21 to identify priority issues to be addressed over the next two years. The IDAG provided valuable advice on the adequacy of detention services, accommodation and facilities at immigration detention centres around Australia.

The new council will also advise on the suitability of facilities and service delivery arrangements but its major focus will be on assisting the department with strategies to resolve a person's immigration status in a community setting rather than in a detention centre provided they pose no risk to the community.

The council will be chaired by Paris Aristotle AM, director of the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture and a former member of Immigration Detention Advisory Group with more than 25 years' experience in the field.

Other members will include:

- Air Marshal Ray Funnell AC (Retd) – former Chief of Air Force and a former member of IDAG, Air Marshal Funnell will serve as the deputy chair for the group
- Ms Kerrin Benson – chief executive officer of the Multicultural Development Association
- Mr Noel Clement – general manager of domestic operations for the Australian Red Cross
- Ms Caz Coleman – project director of the Hotham Mission asylum seeker project
- Ms Libby Lloyd AM – chair of the former National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and was recently appointed to chair the Violence Against Women Advisory Group

- Dr Maryanne Loughry – associate director of Jesuit Refugee Service-Australia. Dr Loughry is a psychologist, a research scholar at Boston College and the University of Oxford and a member of the Governing Council of the International Catholic Migration Commission
- Associate Professor Harry Minas – director of the Centre for International Mental Health, University of Melbourne and the Victorian Transcultural Psychiatry Unit, he is a former member of IDAG and chair of the Detention Health Advisory Group (DeHAG)
- Associate Professor Nicholas Procter – Associate Professor, school of nursing and midwifery, University of South Australia
- Dr Jamal Rifi – Dr Rifi is the 2009 NSW Local Hero of the Year and Recipient of 2007 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Award. He is a former Commissioner for the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, a general practitioner and an active community volunteer
- Professor Samina Yasmeen – director of the Centre for Muslim States and Societies at the University of Western Australia and a current member of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC).

“I believe the new group will provide valuable perspectives and their community links will help to strengthen the provision of community services to immigration clients in support of timely case resolution,” the minister said.

The minister acknowledged the work of members of the previous Immigration Detention Advisory Group.

“I’d like to acknowledge and thank the valuable and long-standing contribution of members of the Immigration Detention Advisory Group since its establishment in 2001,” Senator Evans said.

“Their independent expert advice provided to the previous and current government has been greatly appreciated.”

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# COUNCIL FOR IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND STATUS RESOLUTION

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council for Immigration Services and Status Resolution (CISSR) is established as an independent advisory group to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship to:

- provide independent advice to the Minister on policies, processes, services and programs necessary to achieve the timely, fair and effective resolution of immigration status for people seeking migration outcomes in Australia. This includes people whose immigration status is unresolved residing either in the community or in any form of detention. In particular, the Council will provide advice on:
  - policies, services and programs designed to support the timely resolution of immigration status outcomes
  - the appropriateness and adequacy of services available to assist people whose immigration status is unresolved
  - detention matters including, but not limited to, the suitability of facilities, accommodation and service arrangements.

In addressing these issues, the CISSR will:

- develop a work program, agreed with by the Minister, identifying priority issues to be addressed over the term of the Council's appointment
- respond to specific issues identified as a priority by the Minister and provide advice accordingly
- liaise with relevant non-government and intergovernmental organisations statutory bodies and detention service providers on a regular basis
- regularly visit the range of detention facilities in operation to obtain information on the suitability, environment and operation of each facility
- contribute to and provide advice about areas of research, that would aid in the improvement of policies, programs and services in areas directly related to the Council's terms of reference and
- provide reports on the activities of the Council to the Minister on a regular basis.