



## Migration decision-makers to advise on disability and the health requirement

On Wednesday 17 March 2010 the Joint Standing Committee on Migration will further evaluate the medical assessment and decision-making processes attached to the migration health requirement. The requirement, administered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), is a focus of the Committee's inquiry into the migration treatment of disability.

Australian migration legislation requires that all applicants seeking a visa to travel to, or to remain in, Australia must meet prescribed health criteria. These criteria are meant to protect the community's public health and safety, limit public expenditure on health and welfare, and ensure access to health services.

Migration Committee Chair Michael Danby explained: 'The Committee has now received over one hundred submissions from people with a disability and their families, human rights and disability advocacy organisations, legal, migration and other experts. Among other issues, submitters have raised concerns about the lack of consistency and transparency of decisions made by medical assessors and other departmental decision-makers both in Australia and overseas.'

Australia is among other developed countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, that conduct pre-departure health screenings against health assessment criteria. Onshore assessments are also conducted for temporary residents who want to live permanently in Australia.

'With the inquiry now in its final stages, the Committee welcomes the opportunity for further discussion of the health requirement with the Department's Chief Medical Officer. The Committee will also hear from senior executive staff at DIAC's Family and Health Policy section', Mr Danby said.

### Public hearing

**Committee Room 1R3\*—Parliament House 12.00 pm to 1.00pm**

**Department of Immigration and Citizenship**

**Dr Paul Douglas, Chief Medical Officer**

**Mr Nicholas Torkington, Acting Assistant Secretary, Family and Health Policy**

Visitors are welcome or listen to the live webcast at <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Michael Danby MP, on (02) 6277 4520.

For more information and the inquiry terms of reference, visit the inquiry website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/disability/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/disability/index.htm) or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or [jscm@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscm@aph.gov.au).

\*The meeting room has a hearing loop. Screen reader accessible copy of the Hansard record will be available from the Committee Secretariat within three to five days of the meeting.