



Part Two

OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC FAMILIES

Accreditation of Olympic and Paralympic Family Members

Background

- 3.1 A number of special arrangements have been made to facilitate temporary entry of Games participants and their close associates, generally referred to as the Olympic and Paralympic Families.¹ These arrangements stem from Australia's obligations in relation to the staging of the Olympic Games, and from Australia's desire to ensure that the arrival and departure procedures are coordinated and efficient for all accredited *Family Members*. In order to clearly identify individuals involved, they are required to be *accredited*.
- 3.2 *Accredited Family Members* are those whose nominations by the IOC, National Olympic Committees, International Sporting Federations, Rights Holding Broadcasters and other responsible organisations have been accepted by SOCOG. They may include:
- athletes and team officials, competition officials, accredited officials;
 - Royalty, Heads of State/Government and other senior dignitaries identified by their National Olympic Committee;
 - members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC);

¹ The Olympic and Paralympic Family Members are referred to as *Family* in this report.

- guests of the IOC and IPC, National Olympic Committees and National Paralympic Committees, International Sporting Federations, and International Paralympic Sporting Federations;
- accredited press and broadcast media representatives; and
- representatives and guests of commercial partners (although most guests of commercial partners are not accredited).²

Australia's obligations

- 3.3 Rule 65 of the Olympic Charter requires the host country to allow the accredited holder of an Olympic Identity Card entry into the host country for the duration of the Olympic Games and for a period not exceeding one month before and one month after the Games.
- 3.4 On 27 July 1992 the then Minister undertook that Australia would meet the requirements of Rule 65 but on the understanding that:
- strict controls would be exercised over the issue of Olympic Identity Cards;
 - the holder had unrestricted right of return to the holder's home country; and
 - certain checking procedures may be necessary in the light of control and security requirements prevailing at the time of the Games.
- 3.5 This advice formed part of the documentation submitted with the Sydney bid for the Olympic Games. SOCOG will also apply the same criteria to the Paralympic Games, although there is no obligation to do so.³

Conclusion

- 3.6 Australia has undertaken to allow accredited Olympic Family Members to visit Australia under specific conditions. Although not obliged to, Australia has also extended this undertaking to accredited Paralympic Family Members.

2 SOCOG, Submissions, p. 172.

3 DIMA, Submissions, pp. 106-107; SOCOG Submissions, p. 173.

Recommendation 1

- 3.7 **DIMA should ensure that the special arrangements made for the Olympic Family are extended to the Paralympic Family.**

Meeting the obligations

- 3.8 The Migration Act provides for certain categories of persons to be deemed to hold a Special Purpose Visa (SPV) by virtue of a defined status, for example, aircraft crew. The relevant visa class has been allocated, and the declaration by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs to activate the SPV will be completed by July 2000.⁴ The SPV provisions will be used to permit travel entry and stay of accredited Family Members for one month before, during and after either the Olympic or Paralympic Games.
- 3.9 Family Members who intend to arrive more than one month before the Games open, or leave more than one month after they close, will be required to apply for appropriate visas in the normal way. This need has been identified and, to facilitate their ordinary visa processing, DIMA personnel overseas are in contact with national and Olympic committees.⁵ DIMA personnel in about 50 overseas posts have been designated as contacts for Olympic issues.⁶
- 3.10 Most Games participants and their support teams will, however, arrive in Australia within one month of the opening of the Games, and depart within one month of the conclusion. They will therefore be eligible to be considered for an SPV.

Special Purpose Visa (SPV) procedures

- 3.11 The issuing of the SPV requires coordination between SOCOG and DIMA. SOCOG is the organisation formally responsible for handling the accreditation of Family Members and entry arrangements for both the

4 DIMA, Submissions, p. 355.

5 DIMA, Evidence, p. 6.

6 DIMA, Submissions, p. 121, Evidence, pp 16-17.

Olympics and Paralympics. Relevant responsible organisations will nominate personnel to be considered for accreditation by SOCOG. Under an MOU between SOCOG and DIMA, the nominations are to provide details of the person's full name, chosen name (eg "Beth" rather than "Elizabeth"), date and place of birth, country of birth, passport number and country of issue, and city and country of residence.

- 3.12 SOCOG will pass each nominated individual's details to DIMA. They will be checked against the MAL as well as with other law enforcement agencies if considered necessary. The process will be facilitated by communications links with SOCOG, funded by SOCOG. The details supplied by SOCOG will be retained in the DIMA databases and be accessible in the same way as other visa and passport records. The records will be updated to accommodate withdrawals or alterations in the nomination details, and also will continue to be compared against MAL.⁷
- 3.13 Once an individual's nomination has been cleared by DIMA, SOCOG will be informed electronically of the approval of a multiple entry SPV which will be managed via the ETA system.⁸ Specifically, these will be either an Olympic or a Paralympic Travel Authority (OTA and PTA respectively) enabling the individual to travel to Australia.⁹ The OTA will be valid from 15 August through 1 November 2000, and the PTA from 18 September through 29 November 2000.
- 3.14 In short, applicants for accreditation will not be required to apply for a visa because, when a responsible body nominates them to SOCOG, their nominations will initiate the SPV process outlined above.
- 3.15 SOCOG will inform the responsible organisations in writing that the OTA/PTA have been issued and proceed to issue the formal accreditation required for SOCOG purposes. Accredited Family Members are therefore those whose nomination by a responsible body has been accepted by SOCOG, (after clearance by DIMA), and who will not be in Australia for more than one month prior to or after the Games.
- 3.16 Accredited Family Members are expected to number some 10,000 athletes and 33,000 others for the Olympics and 4,000 (plus 6,000) for the Paralympics.¹⁰

7 DIMA, Submissions, p. 120.

8 DIMA, Submissions, p. 119. Individuals arriving in Australia more than one month before the Games or leaving more than one month after, and who have been successfully nominated to SOCOG, will be issued with the relevant SPV for the Games and one month before and after.

9 Individuals attending both the Olympic and the Paralympic Games will be required to be accredited to each separately.

10 DIMA Submissions, p. 141; SOCOG, Evidence, pp. 83-84.

3.17 The precise agreement between SOCOG and DIMA concerning accreditation (and the sharing of costs) will be the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This was expected to be finalised before the end of August 1999.¹¹ Without having seen the MOU, the Committee was unable to comment on it, but was concerned to know its details because of its implications for the consistency in visa procedures and border protection arrangements.

Conclusion

3.18 The Committee is concerned about the slow progress on the MOU on accreditation process and its possible implications for border control authorities.

Recommendation 2

3.19 **The Committee recommends that the MOU be finalised as a matter of urgency.**

Recommendation 3

3.20 **The Committee recommends that the finalised MOU be sent to the Committee for further assessment.**

Potential rejections

3.21 It is anticipated by SOCOG that all personnel nominated by the relevant responsible organisations will be accorded access to Australia.¹² However, it is possible that some individuals may have adverse records on the MAL which could identify potentially controversial visitors, or concerns over character. Currently senior officials of the relevant agencies coordinate and handle these issues. For the Games, a more formal arrangement will apply; the Entry Advisory Group (EAG). The group, chaired by DIMA

11 DIMA, Submissions, p. 352.

12 SOCOG, Submissions, p. 174.

and involving DFAT, ASIO, and PM&C, will be operating by June 2000, which is the expected peak period for referrals from SOCOG. DIMA and SOCOG will formalise mechanisms for advising SOCOG of any problems with Family accreditation. The EAG will operate until the closure of the Paralympics, dealing quickly with sensitive issues and able to provide advice and recommendations to Ministers.¹³

- 3.22 In the case of a nominee being found unacceptable to Australia there are, apparently, no formal arrangements for handling the rejection of their application for accreditation. SOCOG advised the Committee that a precedent was understood to exist, whereby an individual eligible to be a member of the Family but considered unacceptable could be excluded in consultation with the IOC.¹⁴

Documentation

- 3.23 The OTA/PTA electronic documentation is the mechanism by which accredited Family Members will be allowed access to Australia. However, readily identifiable Family documentation will assist in ensuring that the Family Members are received appropriately in Australia. SOCOG, in consultation with DIMA, has devised cards which, when validated, identify and accredit the holder. Individuals will be issued with this *combined accreditation card* by SOCOG, following their clearance by DIMA. The Olympic cards will have a different design from the Paralympic cards, but both are expected to incorporate security devices; a photograph of the holder; their personal details; status; and their level of access to Games venues and services. Once validated on arrival in Australia, the combined accreditation card is evidence that the holder has been approved to attend the Games.

Combined accreditation card distribution

- 3.24 The combined accreditation cards will be despatched to the holder's responsible organisation for distribution to enable them to be readily identified as Family Members on arrival in Australia. In order to achieve the desired efficient and coordinated processing of the Family Members in Australia, as many as possible should have their combined accreditation

13 DIMA, Submissions, pp. 134, 354.

14 SOCOG, Submissions, p. 174; Evidence p. 86.

card prior to arrival. SOCOG's ability to achieve this is heavily dependent on the abilities of the responsible home country authorities to nominate individuals, provide their details, and distribute documentation in a timely manner.

- 3.25 SOCOG expects to begin to receive applications for Games accreditation from 1 May 2000. The deadline for Olympic accreditation applications is 1 June 2000, two months prior to the opening of the Olympic village.¹⁵ For the Paralympics the cut-off is 14 July 2000. Family Members whose responsible organisations miss these deadlines for the supply of information and photographs, but whose accreditation is approved, will be granted an OTA/PTA as appropriate. But they will not receive the combined accreditation card until arrival in Australia. This has implications for the speed of entry at the border.
- 3.26 SOCOG plans to have 65 per cent of the Olympic Family issued with their combined accreditation card in advance, but expects to continue to receive applications and to issue accreditation until the last day of the Paralympic Games.¹⁶

Conclusion

- 3.27 The accreditation process is vulnerable to delays in the submission of applications. Applicants whose organisation missed the SOCOG deadlines will lack an OTA/PTA, which could hinder their embarkation for Australia. Without an OTA/PTA they would not be readily identifiable as eligible Family Members entitled to special treatment. In addition to the implications for the Family Members, the Committee was also concerned that the need to clarify such issues would also interfere with the efficient processing of both Family Members and other visitors.

Recommendation 4

- 3.28 **The Committee recommends that SOCOG promote the advantages to accredited Family Members of the early submission of applications, and encourages Family Members to submit their applications for accreditation early.**

15 SOCOG, Submissions, p. 174.

16 SOCOG, Submissions, pp. 173-174, Evidence, p. 88.

Other documentation

- 3.29 Accredited Family membership will be established by the existence of their OTA/PTA via the ETA system. In addition to valid visas, non-citizens arriving in Australia require valid travel documents which are recognised by Australia. Of the countries likely to be included in the Family, only the status of documents of “Palestine” and Chinese Taipei appeared to be an issue.¹⁷ However, DFAT advised the Committee that Palestinian Authority passports were considered valid travel documents, and Family Members holding them would be eligible for OTA/PTA. However, Taiwan’s official and diplomatic passports are not recognised by Australia. Family Members will therefore have to use ordinary Taiwanese passports. Prior to the Games, DFAT and DIMA will be stressing to the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee the need for accredited Family Members to travel on ordinary Taiwanese passports.¹⁸
- 3.30 Individuals who may become accredited Family Members, but who will be arriving in Australia more than a month prior to the Games, will not have been issued with an OTA/PTA. They are, therefore, expected to complete the appropriate visa formalities and have a visa or an ETA.
- 3.31 There may be individuals legitimately entitled to be accredited Family Members who, through delays in the submission of applications to SOCOG, may lack an OTA/PTA and have not applied for a visa or ETA. Airlines can seek permission to uplift these individuals through DIMA’s 24-hour Entry Operations Centre in Canberra which is already operating and is in routine use. Airlines which transport unauthorised passengers may be subject to fines.¹⁹

Games accreditation validation

- 3.32 SOCOG expects that 65 per cent of the accredited Family Members will also have a combined accreditation card on arrival. SOCOG is pursuing with DIMA and ACS arrangements for validation of the combined accreditation card (for SOCOG purposes) prior to the primary line at Sydney International Airport. The card is not machine-readable by DIMA and validation will involve activating the holder’s SOCOG computer record and altering the appearance of the card to indicate that it has been

17 DIMA, Submissions, p. 117.

18 DFAT, Submissions, p. 285.

19 Qantas, Evidence, pp. 114-115, 117-121.

validated. This is expected to take 60-90 seconds. Family Members would then pass through dedicated channels at the primary line.²⁰

- 3.33 Family Members whose applications did not meet the SOCOG deadlines will not have combined accreditation cards. They will receive them at SOCOG accreditation centres after passing through the airport.²¹

Summary

- 3.34 Special arrangements have been made to facilitate the identification, entry and departure of Family Members. In the immigration context, the undertaking to allocate SPVs using the ETA system will temporarily expand the availability of ETA from the current 31 nations to about 200.
- 3.35 The Committee notes that this expansion of ETA constitutes a significant, specific and explicitly limited concession for the Family, based on existing guidelines on SPVs. Because of the highly specific conditions attached to the visas, the Games are unlikely to provide useful guidance on the broader question of further expansion of ETA to nationals not currently able to access them.

20 SOCOG, Evidence, pp. 81-83.

21 SOCOG, Submissions, p. 174.

