JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION:
REPORT ON IMMIGRATION ENTRY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

JSCM RECOMMENDATION

1. *DIMA should ensure that special arrangements made for the Olympic Family are extended to the Paralympic Family.*	Agreed. DIMA is ensuring that special arrangements apply equally to both Olympic and Paralympic Family Members. SOCOG are handling entry and accreditation arrangements on behalf of SPOC for the Paralympic Games and Paralympic Family Members will receive the same level of service from DIMA as their Olympic counterparts.
2. *The Committee recommends that the MOU be finalised as a matter of urgency.*	Agreed. The MOU was signed on 7 December 1999.
3. *The Committee recommends that the finalised MOU be sent to the Committee for further assessment.*	Agreed. The MOU was sent to the JSCM on 24 December 1999.

4. *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.*	Agreed. SOCOG advises that it supports the Committee's recommendations and is working closely with the Commonwealth's border control agencies to ensure that arrival, processing and exit arrangements ensure the smooth and timely movement of Olympic and Paralympic Family Members. DIMA is using its overseas network to work with National Olympic and Paralympic Committees to educate them and to assist the smooth travel of Family Members.
5. *The Committee recommends that the proposed Entry Response Team (ERT) be formed as a matter of urgency to enable full and proper training and testing, to ensure that the ERT will be able to perform its duties efficiently.*	Agreed. Training of Immigration Inspectors, including ERT members, is underway.
6. *The Committee recommends that consideration be given to allowing airlines carrying large numbers of Family Members access to the Village on day of departure.*	Agreed. SOCOG advises that it supports the Committee's recommendations and is working closely with the Commonwealth's border control agencies to ensure that arrival, processing and exit arrangements ensure the smooth and timely movement of Olympic and Paralympic Family Members.

7. *The Committee recommends that consideration be given by the border control authorities to the provision of dedicated border clearance arrangements for Family Members, possibly through off-site processing.*	Agreed. The Australian Customs Service (Customs) supports the Committee's recommendation and advises that dedicated Olympic and Paralympic Family processing lanes will be established at the Outwards Control points at Sydney Airport. Consideration is being given to processing OFMs, travelling on dedicated charter flights, at off-site locations including the Athletes Village and certain hotels and floating hotels. Consideration is also being given to dedicated processing arrangements for Athletes Village residents. SACL advises that it supports the recommendation and that it will also examine temporary dedicated OPFM (Olympic and Paralympic Family Member) processing points in the Terminal Building with discrete airside access.

8. *The Committee recommends that DIMA as the Coordinator of the VIC web-site:*
 	
   - *include translations of the abridged booklet on the website as they become available, and*
 	
   - *consult with SOCOG with a view to reviving the hyperlink from the official Games site to the relevant government sites.*
	Agreed.
	
	Translations into French, Spanish and German have been available on the site for some time and other languages will be added as they become available.
	
	The hyperlink has been restored.

9. *The Committee recommends that, as a matter of urgency, DFAT examine the potential embarrassment if a large number of visa applications from any country is refused, and work with DIMA on reducing this potential.*	Agreed. DFAT and DIMA support this recommendation. DFAT is working closely with DIMA to manage the efficient processing of visa applications, especially in countries where refusal rates are currently higher than average. Should there be evidence at an early stage of an unusually high rate of refusal for any country, DFAT and DIMA would manage these on a case by case basis, taking into account the reasons for rejection. Many of Australia's overseas posts are pursuing a strategy of working with National Olympic and Paralympic committees, tour operators and other interested parties to raise awareness of entry and visa procedures and to encourage early lodgement of applications where this is appropriate.
10. *The Committee recommends that an independent review analyse the effect of the visa application fee on applications and the effect on Australia's image as a potential tourist destination.*	Disagreed. DIMA is not aware of any empirical evidence to substantiate the claim that the visa application fee has any effect on Australia's potential as a tourist destination. Over 85% of all tourists enter Australia on a free ETA and growth in non-ETA markets has remained strong over the past two years. Visa application fees for visitors from non-ETA countries are broadly in line with those charged by most of our tourism competitors.

11. *The Committee recommends that the number of countries eligible for ETA be expanded.*	Agreed in principle. ETA arrangements which were introduced in Singapore in September 1996 are now available to passport holders from 31 countries and locations including the majority of Australia's high volume, low risk tourist source areas: Japan, USA, UK, several Western European countries, Hong Kong and Taiwan. More than 5 million ETAs have been issued to date and they are widely available. Over 70 airlines participate in the ETA system and ETAs are available from more than 50,000 external service providers. Holders of ETA-eligible passports are not required to apply for ETAs in their country of citizenship. Over 85% of all visitors and short term business travellers to Australia choose to obtain an ETA rather than a traditional label visa. In countries where the national passport is an ETA-eligible passport over 95% of travellers obtain an ETA rather than a label visa. ETA now covers all high volume tourist markets, and is now in its consolidation phase. Other tourist markets may become suitable for ETA in the future.
12. *The Committee recommends that DIMA monitor the current practice among agents issuing ETAs to determine the proportion charging and the amounts charged by the various agencies.*	Disagreed. Fees for ETA processing charged by external service providers are not subject to Australian Government regulation or control and any attempt by Government to "monitor" agents would be seen by the industry as an unwelcome intrusion into their business. Access to the Electronic Travel Authority System is provided free of charge by the Australian Government to ETA external service providers (which include airlines and travel agents worldwide). Over 22,500 external service providers use the ETA system.

13. *The Committee recommends that, prior to and during the Games, DIMA and DFAT publicise their willingness to assist the unaccredited media.*	Agreed. DIMA is committed to providing a high level of service to all media outlets including the unaccredited media and is: • Working closely with the whole-of-Government media strategy being implemented by PM&C • Allowing unaccredited media representatives to enter under business ETA or business visa arrangements; • Providing Posts with information to meet the needs of unaccredited media. DFAT advises that it recognises the importance of providing high quality information, efficient advice and services to all overseas media interests in Australia for the Games. To service increased media interest in Australia DFAT has introduced several new services, including: Expansion of DFAT's International Media Centre in Sydney to service the increasing number of overseas media visitors with program support and information. A dedicated Internet website to service media interest in Australia with on-line information about major policy areas including indigenous issues, economic settings and social cohesiveness within cultural diversity. Establishment of a joint venture Sydney Media Centre for overseas reporters not accredited by SOCOG providing a centralised service for non-game issues. Promotion of services to media visitors through DFAT's overseas posts networks using Sydney 2000 countdown events and directly servicing key media contacts with information on available services. SACL plan to establish welcome desks for unaccredited media, one in each international arrivals pier at Sydney Airport.

14. *The Committee recommends that, with respect to API, DIMA and ACS:*	Agreed.
- *assess the level of its use prior to the Games period;*	Border agencies received API for 35% of all passengers arriving in Australia for the 12 months to 30 June 1999. The figure for departing passengers for the same period was 6.4%.
- *pursue expanded access by airlines to simplify and further streamline passenger processing; and*	A steering committee chaired by DIMA and including Customs has been established to achieve maximum uptake and implementation of APP/API thereby providing a greater level of Advance Passenger Information to the border agencies. Currently four airlines provide API data. Customs and DIMA are vigorously marketing the APP system to all major airlines and have developed mutually beneficial agreements for airlines to consider – which include the requirement for the carriers to promote the use of the "express" card and its benefits to arrivals processing.
- *liaise with the relevant airlines for more extensive promotion of the API system, awareness of the "Express" card, and its relevance to the arrivals streaming.*	The Australian Government has approached over 50 major international airlines to establish formal agreements (in the from of a Memorandum of Understanding) around the implementation of APP to assist achievement of the mutual goal of border integrity and passenger facilitation.

15. *The Committee recommends that border authorities undertake specific early testing of computer performance in situations approaching predicted levels and duration of demand.*	Agreed. The Australian Customs Service advise that prior to implementation of the new Customs' Passenger Analysis Clearance and Evaluation System (PACE), production load testing was run in a simulated environment. During this time the system was subjected to predicted Olympic volume loads without any significant degradation in performance. In addition the system was tested at 10% and 20% above the predicted Olympic volumes with the same results. With the PACE system implemented, capacity planning is being undertaken based on recorded production loads and utilisation to confirm the results found during the pre-production testing. DIMA's Electronic Travel Authority System (ETAS), implemented in 1996, is designed to handle at least nine million visitors a year – double the number of international tourists expected to visit Australia in 2000 and would be able to process the additional visitors to Australia over the Olympic period.
16. *The Committee recommends that, to provide a surge capacity for the Games period, the border authorities consider offering short-term employment to appropriately qualified and/or experienced former officers.*	Agreed. Border agencies have commenced training programs and are putting other strategies in place which will provide adequate staffing to cover all contingencies during the period of the Games. This may involve some redeployment of existing resources. Contingency planning will take into account the likely need to consider using former officers.

17. *The Committee recommends that assistance to non-English speaking visitors be enhanced with increased multilingual and graphic signage.*	Agreed. The Sydney Airports Corporation Ltd (SACL) supports the recommendation. SACL advise that as part of the Sydney Airport 2000 International Terminal redevelopment project all directional, regulatory and international signage is being upgraded or replaced. This will include the extensive use of internationally accepted pictograms and enhanced use of dynamic signage. An airport signage master plan has been prepared and will provide a logical migration of signage from the car park through to the aircraft and from the aircraft to ground transportation. Multilingual signage can be displayed on the dynamic signage monitors. At Games time this signage will be supplemented with SOCOG's way finding signage in the official International Olympic Committee languages for the Sydney 2000 Games, English and French. SACL's Gold Ambassadors providing hospitality services within the International Terminal's controlled areas will be able to offer a range of linguist services. They will also be backed up by SOCOG's telephone multilingual services.
18. *The Committee recommends that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, as the coordinator of Olympic and Paralympic responsibilities, pursue the issue of minimising land-side congestion at Sydney.*	Disagreed. PM&C advise that responsibility for landside congestion at Sydney Airport rests with SACL and the New South Wales Government. The Committee's recommendation has been conveyed to SACL. SACL comments that significant infrastructure improvements at Sydney Airport will enhance the flow of people in all areas at Games time. "Meet and greet" arrangements for Family members will be done in such a way as not to impede the flow of non-Games traffic.

19. *The Committee recommends that the border authorities consider the implementation of all methods to ease congestion at the departure checking lines, such as a single line/multiple queuing system for departing passengers.*	Agreed. Border agencies, SACL and Games organising committees are considering several initiatives designed to ease congestion at the departure point. These include off-airport processing and check-in in particular circumstances; outwards processing at airside bus lounges; and various options designed to streamline processing at the outwards control point – including dedicated Olympic passenger lanes and consideration of alternatives to the current queuing arrangements.
20. *The Committee recommends that there should be 24-hour on-site coverage by Australian ALOs at the hub airports of Bangkok and Singapore.*	Disagreed. At present there is no need for 24 hour coverage by an Australian ALO at either of these airports since the Australian bound traffic does not operate from these airports evenly over the 24 hour period. In recognition of the importance of both Singapore and Bangkok airports, an additional ALO has been placed at both airports to maximise the period of coverage for Australian bound flights. The additional resources were as a result of the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Coastal Surveillance Task Force. Whilst there are now two ALOs at both airports (and also Kuala Lumpur), these resources do not provide for 24 hour, seven days a week coverage. However, as outlined above this is not required given current flight departure patterns.

21. *The Committee recommends that DIMA should not, as a matter of policy, rely on the assistance of ALOs from other countries to monitor travellers to Australia and assist check-in staff. Prior to the Games, DIMA should ensure that it has adequate migration coverage at key hub overseas airports.*	Disagreed. International people smuggling impacts on several countries including Australia, Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and several European and Scandinavian countries. In order to combat people smuggling, there is a high degree of international, inter-agency cooperation and information sharing. A means of maximising the effectiveness of resources at airports across the globe is to work in close cooperation with ALOs from other countries and this allows coverage of Australian flights where there is insufficient justification for a full time Australian ALO. Australia also performs interception work relating to improperly documented travellers on behalf of other countries and Australian ALOs intercept many such passengers flying to destinations other than Australia. The number of Australia bound interceptions may determine the requirement for the presence of an ALO, but when an ALO is present at an airport, airlines tend to take advantage of their expertise and experience for all flights.