

# Media release

## INTERNATIONAL STUDY SAYS IT'S ONE OF THE BEST TIMES TO BECOME AUSTRALIAN

### AUSTRALIA'S CITIZENSHIP POLICIES RANK 3<sup>RD</sup> OUT OF 33 COUNTRIES

Australia is a world leader on providing a clear path to citizenship, according to an international study on migrant settlement published today by the Migration Policy Group. Australia ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 33 countries on citizenship policies and 5<sup>th</sup> in its overall approach to giving legal migrants opportunities to participate in society.

Key findings of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) show that:

- A wide range of permanent residents and their children can apply for and quickly receive Australian citizenship and participate in public life, as in Canada.
- The citizenship test has become more flexible and professional, but the level of English required is more demanding than in Canada and the US.
- Australia's multicultural policies stand out as helping newcomers enter civic and political life, even before the launch of the new anti-racism strategy and the new 'People of Australia' policy.

*'SCOA welcomes the findings of the MPG MIPEX study, highlighting as it does the strength of multiculturalism in Australia, and the inclusive environment which supports migrants to settle and work in Australia. The detailed analysis shows Australia's strong position internationally and also provides interesting ideas for further improvement. Implementing these ideas, such as better support for skills recognition and facilitating migrant entry into the job market will only strengthen Australia, socially and economically.'* Cedric Manen, Chair of the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA)

Australia does better than most countries to encourage immigrants and their children to reunite as a family, achieve their best in school and to become full Australian citizens. However, Australia falls behind Canada, the US and other countries with whom it competes for migrant workers, when it comes to access and support in the labour market, equal social rights and coherent anti-discrimination laws.

*'Australia could learn from other countries on anti-discrimination law and providing equal opportunities for all migrant workers. However, in general Australia should be proud of its laws and policies as many countries of immigration in the world don't encourage immigrants to become citizens and participate in public life.'* Jan Niessen, Director of the Migration Policy Group (MPG)

For further information on the study or to interview Thomas Huddleston, Research Coordinator, Migration Policy Group please contact on +32 (0) 2 234 5045 or e-mail [thuddleston@migpolgroup.com](mailto:thuddleston@migpolgroup.com)

For further information on migrant settlement in Australia please contact Sky de Jersey, Executive Officer of the Settlement Council of Australia on +61 (0) 2 8065 5225 or email [eo@scoa.org.au](mailto:eo@scoa.org.au)

For the full MIPEX Australia results please go to [www.mipex.org/australia](http://www.mipex.org/australia)

For more about MIPEX and to use the online tool: [www.mipex.org](http://www.mipex.org)

MIPEX on Twitter: @MIPEXIII and #MIPEX

MIPEX on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MigrantIntegrationPolicyIndex>

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the study**

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a fully interactive tool and reference guide to assess, compare and improve integration policy. Using 148 policy indicators the MIPEX creates a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in society by assessing governments' commitment to integration.

The Migration Policy Group (MPG) has used the MIPEX tool on [www.mipex.org](http://www.mipex.org) to lead a MIPEX assessment of Australia.

The Australian partners in the MIPEX assessment are Monash University and the Settlement Council of Australia. The cut-off date for the research was September 2010, and is comparable to the cut-off date for the countries assessed in the MIPEX III round as no changes occurred since May 2010.

### **More about the Migrant Integration Policy Index III (MIPEX III)**

- The MIPEX III compared and ranked 31 countries' scores across 148 policy indicators. It provided objective and comparable data presented in a reference guide and an interactive online tool to help policymakers, civil society advocates and researchers assess, compare and improve integration.
- The MIPEX III project concluded in June 2011. The MIPEX tool was developed for continuous data collection and assessment.
- Countries included in the MIPEX III study: all 27 EU member states, Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the USA. The MIPEX tool now includes two new countries: Japan and Australia, with a research cut-off date of September 2010, containing information comparable to the MIPEXIII cut-off date of May 2010.
- The MIPEX III was co-financed by the European Community under the European Integration Fund. The British Council project managed the initiative with the lead research partner, the Migration Policy Group. Over 37 national-level partners contributed to the Index study.
- The first edition of MIPEX was published in 2004 and the second edition in 2007, leading to its use by governments, press, civil society organisations. See [www.mipex.org](http://www.mipex.org) for more information.
- The MIPEX is not used to study migration; it is about integration of legal migrants. It does not look at increasing or decreasing influxes of migrants but instead considers whether immigrants have the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as nationals.
- The responsibility of ideas or opinions expressed in the Index lies solely with the Migration Policy Group.
- All research partners are scholars and experts on their countries' integration policies, independent from government.

### **About the Migration Policy Group**

The Migration Policy Group is an independent non-profit European think-tank committed to contributing to lasting and positive change resulting in open and inclusive societies ([www.migpolgroup.org](http://www.migpolgroup.org)).



### **About the Settlement Council of Australia**

The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) is the national peak body representing migrant and refugee settlement agencies across Australia. SCOA is a membership-based organisation; our members provide a range of services to support refugees and humanitarian entrants as they settle into life in Australia. SCOA provides a credible and informed source of knowledge and advice on migrant and refugee settlement issues, settlement planning, service delivery and related policy and program matters.

### **About Monash University**

In Australia, the data was completed and peer reviewed by a team at [Monash University](#) including [Susan Kneebone](#), [Reyvi Marinas](#), and Kushanthi Harasgama.