

# The Southern Cross Group

*Promoting mobility in the global community*



## MEDIA RELEASE

The Southern Cross Group (SCG) welcomes the report by Professor Graeme Hugo on Australian expatriates launched at CEDA (Committee for Economic Development of Australia) in Melbourne today by Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone.

The report, entitled "Australia's Diaspora: Its Size, Nature and Policy Implications", sets out research findings based on a survey of over 2,000 expatriate Australians. Many of those who were surveyed were contacted by the Southern Cross Group.

SCG Australian Coordinator, John MacGregor, said that the SCG wholeheartedly supported the various recommendations made by Professor Hugo in the report. "There is no doubt that there is an urgent need for Australia to develop a coherent national diaspora policy and for more research to be carried out", he said.

Robyn Stephenson, the SCG's North America Coordinator, said that Professor Hugo's recommendation that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) should look at ways of including overseas Australians in the census should now be acted upon without further delay. "Earlier this year the SCG told the Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee as part of its inquiry into DFAT's National Interest White Paper that a way needs to be found to properly count expatriate Australians", she said. "We reinforced our call with a detailed submission directly to the ABS in August 2003."

The Senate's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee tabled its report on the DFAT White Paper in Parliament on 4 December. The Committee recommended:

"that the Australian Bureau of Statistics develop mechanisms for accurately enumerating the numbers of Australian citizens living overseas, with a view to facilitating their full participation in the Australian Census".

The Senate Committee also endorsed the views of the SCG that "those overseas should not be treated as "invisible" by the Australian Government. Australians overseas are highly visible "ambassadors" of their country and play a key role in advancing Australian interests around the world".

In Brussels, SCG Co-founder Anne MacGregor said that the Group is encouraging Australians at home and overseas and all interested organisations to make submissions to the current Senate Constitutional and Legal References Committee Inquiry into Australian Expatriates by the deadline of 27 February 2004. "That Inquiry presents a unique opportunity for the airing and development of diaspora concepts, which have again been brought under the spotlight by Professor Hugo's timely report".

### Links:

*Executive Summary of Hugo Report:*

<http://www.ceda.com.au/ResearchNew/Publications/Other/AustraliasDiaspora.pdf>

*SCG Submission to the ABS of 18 August 2003:*

[http://www.southern-cross-group.org/archives/Australian%20Diaspora/SCG\\_Submission\\_to\\_ABS\\_18\\_August%202003.pdf](http://www.southern-cross-group.org/archives/Australian%20Diaspora/SCG_Submission_to_ABS_18_August%202003.pdf)

*Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Report Tabled 4 December 2003:*

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/FADT\\_CTTE/white\\_paper/report/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/FADT_CTTE/white_paper/report/index.htm)

*Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee Inquiry into Australian Expatriates:*

<http://www.southern-cross-group.org/austdiaspora/overview.html>

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The Southern Cross Group is an international non-profit advocacy and support organisation for the Australian diaspora.

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