



Philip Ruddock MP

Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs

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Launch of the Australian Citizenship Council Report

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The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Philip Ruddock, has welcomed the release of the Australian Citizenship Council report "Australian Citizenship for a New Century", in Sydney today. Mr Ruddock thanked the Council, headed by Sir Ninian Stephen, for its report which includes 64 recommendations on a wide range of citizenship matters.

"Sir Ninian and his colleagues have come up with an impressive and informative document which will stimulate discussion on a topic of importance to all Australians", Mr Ruddock said.

The report is the culmination of a process that began in August 1998, when Mr Ruddock asked the Council to advise the Government on contemporary issues in Australian citizenship policy and law.

The Council looked at how to promote increased community awareness of the significance of Australian citizenship, including its role as a unifying symbol.

"The Council has produced a comprehensive and wide-ranging report that examines major issues relevant to future citizenship policies and programs, and puts forward a range of ideas for future directions," Mr Ruddock said.

"It is very timely to have a report concerned with these issues. There has been growing interest in citizenship matters, the meaning of Australian citizenship and its role in developing and maintaining an inclusive and harmonious society."

The Minister said the Council's report demonstrated the importance of Australian citizenship as well as suggesting how concepts of citizenship can best serve Australia and Australians in the 21st Century. "Interest in Australian citizenship is likely to reach a peak as we approach the Centenary of Federation in 2001, itself a time when Australians are likely to reflect on what it is that really unites us as a nation," Mr Ruddock said.

The Government will now consider the Council's report in detail, seek community comment, and respond in due course.

A copy of the report *Australian Citizenship for a New Century* can be obtained from the Council Secretariat, PO Box 25, Belconnen, ACT 2616, or by phoning (02) 6264 1322. Alternatively, the report is available at the Internet address [www.immi.gov.au/citizen\(o\)/report.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/citizen(o)/report.htm).

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