

Media Release

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IRAN AND AUSTRALIA TO COOPERATE ON CONSULAR MATTERS

The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Philip Ruddock, today signed an agreement with senior government officials from the Islamic Republic of Iran that provides for cooperation on a range of consular issues.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding on Consular Matters, Australia and Iran have agreed on a range of initiatives to promote the legal and mutually beneficial movement of people between the two countries. The MOU also includes measures to combat illegal migration.

Australia and Iran have agreed that their first priority is to work together to promote the voluntary repatriation of those Iranians currently in detention in Australia. However, arrangements for the handling of those who do not volunteer to return have also been established.

The MOU also establishes a Work and Holiday Visa (WHV) scheme that will provide opportunities for young Iranians and Australians to work and holiday in each others' country, further strengthening the cultural and personal links between the two countries.

The delegation of senior government officials from Iran comprised representatives of the Iranian Foreign Affairs, Labour and Interior Ministries, underlining the breadth of the issues covered by the agreement.

I thank the Iranian Government delegation for coming to Australia and providing an opportunity to work together to build a closer relationship between Australia and Iran in these areas.

Australia has received a regular stream of Iranian visitors and temporary entrants, with some 10,672 arriving lawfully between 1995 and 2000.

I look forward to further expansion of these mutually beneficial and legal movements of people between Australia and Iran.

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