



Media release

Senator Chris Evans

Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

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New body to regulate migration agents

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, today announced the establishment of a new body to regulate migration agents after a review found dissatisfaction among consumers and potential conflicts of interest under the current arrangements.

Senator Evans said that from July 1, the new Office of Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA) will undertake the regulatory functions which have been operated under statutory self-regulation by the Migration Institute of Australia (MIA) since 1998.

"The current arrangement has the industry association managing the regulatory function of its own members – which includes the handling of complaints – and this has caused serious concerns among consumers and stakeholders," Senator Evans said.

The *2007-08 Review of Statutory Self-Regulation of the Migration Advice Profession*, which was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the regulatory scheme, recommended that the government consider establishing a regulatory body separate from the MIA to address the concerns.

"Unprofessional, incompetent or unethical behaviour by migration agents affects the lives of consumers, challenges the integrity of Australia's visa program and brings the entire profession of more than 3700 migration agents into disrepute," Senator Evans said.

"It is therefore in the consumers', the government's and the profession's collective interests to address the serious concerns raised in this review.

"As migration decisions are life-changing and involve considerable financial and emotional investments on behalf of prospective migrants, it is important they have confidence in the professionalism and integrity of their migration agent.

"The changes we are making will provide greater confidence to the consumers of migration advice services and remove concerns about potential conflicts of interest."

The new MARA will be supported by an advisory board, which will include a nominee from the MIA, a nominee from the Law Council of Australia, a consumer representative and a community representative. The office will receive administrative support from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Senator Evans said that the establishment of the new body is the first step in the implementation of a range of recommendations made in the review.

The *2007-08 Review of Statutory Self-Regulation of the Migration Advice Profession* is available at: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/general/review2008-report.htm>