



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

Media Release

17/05

Friday 22 April 2005
(Thursday 21 April Chilean time)

AVCC and Dr Nelson meet with Chilean Education Ministry

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) delegation to Latin America today met up with the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, in Chile for a series of consultations with the Chilean Education Ministry.

On the second leg of the Latin America visit, the AVCC delegation and Dr Nelson have today met with the Chilean Minister, Minister Bitar, to discuss a broad range of mutual topics including distance education, joint programs and degrees, biotechnology and research collaboration.

AVCC President Professor Di Yerbury said the collaborative meeting today, and subsequent joint meetings with the Ministry and Chilean universities in the following days, are very important elements in further strengthening relations between the two countries and their university sectors.

The AVCC delegation also met today with representatives of its counterpart organisation in Chile, the Chilean Council of University Rectors (CRUCH).

"I am happy to announce that today the AVCC and CRUCH signed a preliminary agreement to strengthen and grow the formal linkages between and among Australian and Chilean universities," Professor Yerbury said.

"Broadly, the agreement seeks to increase Australia-Chile university collaboration, particularly in the research field, as well as looking to increase the number of staff and student exchanges.

"Chile is a member of the University Mobility in the Asia Pacific (UMAP) network. Therefore there already exists an avenue through which credit transfer for the exchange of students can be effected," she said.

Professor Yerbury also said that Australia could play an important role in one of Chile's national strategic aims.

"Chile as a nation has set the benchmark to be bilingual by 2010. Australian universities are willing to be a part of facilitating this process.

"On the home front, Australian universities are increasingly encouraging their students to take full advantage of their choice of study destinations and at the same time obtain language skills and increase cross-cultural understanding," she said.

Professor Yerbury said that providing opportunities for Australian and Chilean academics to engage across a variety of areas including research collaboration and staff exchange will ensure that long-term contacts and networks are developed and sustained.

Ends

Media Inquiries: Callista Punch

Ph: 02 6285 8206

Mob: 0400 166 691

For all the latest from and about Australia's universities visit the AVCC website: www.avcc.edu.au