

Southern Cross Group E-Bulletin to Members

13 September 2002

Australian Citizenship Online Affirmation

Please forward this message on to other Australians or former Australians, overseas or in Australia.

Dear Southern Cross Group Friends,

Tuesday 17 September 2002 is Australian Citizenship Day.

Australians overseas have much to celebrate this year. Due to the recent repeal of Section 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948, since 4 April 2002 Australian citizens who acquire another citizenship no longer forfeit their Australian citizenship.

We know from the enormous support that many thousands of expatriate Australians gave the Southern Cross Group in its long campaign to have Section 17 repealed, that many of you feel extremely passionately about your Australian citizenship and attach great importance to it.

As we celebrate Australian Citizenship Day, it's important to spare a thought for those former Australians who have lost their citizenship and cannot currently get it back. Since 4 April 2002, no further Australians are losing their citizenship when they take another citizenship, but historical victims of Section 17, who lost their citizenship before that date, do not suddenly now automatically get it back. They are required to use the resumption provisions in the Australian Citizenship Act 1948. Those rules prevent former Australians who are still overseas, and who are unable to make a declaration that they intend to reside in Australia again within three years, from becoming Australian citizens again. We know from many e-mails we have received that this is a matter of considerable heartache for a number of people. Therefore, on the occasion of Australian Citizenship Day, the Southern Cross Group is renewing its call for the Government to broaden the current resumption provisions in the Act.

On Australian Citizenship Day, thousands of Australian citizens in Australia will be able to affirm their loyalty to the nation by participating in Citizenship Affirmation Ceremonies around the country. To our knowledge, no Affirmation Ceremonies are being held outside Australia for the some 860,000 Australians overseas.

Nevertheless, we have made available on our website an online affirmation facility. We hope that those who would like to affirm their citizenship but cannot attend an affirmation ceremony will consider using this online facility. If you are a former Australian, you can also use our online affirmation facility to affirm your commitment to Australia.

Affirmations are entirely voluntary. Once you've considered the information on our website, if you decide to make an affirmation, a copy of your affirmation will be sent to the Australian Minister for Citizenship, the Hon Gary Hardgrave, MP. If you wish, you can add a paragraph to your affirmation message urging the Government to rethink the current resumption rules. You may also like to write a personal message to the Minister, and share your affirmation with relatives and friends who are important to you. Affirmations can be done at any time,

either before, on, or after 17 September. Our affirmation facility will remain a permanent part of our website.

To read more about Australian Citizenship Day and to make your affirmation, go to:

<http://www.southern-cross-group.org/affirmation/dualaffirmation.html>

This is an opportunity for the Australian expatriate community to demonstrate to decision-makers in Canberra that even though we are overseas we nevertheless share what the Government has termed "the common bond of citizenship". We hope you will join us in this project, and in addition add your voice to ours in our campaign to achieve a more equitable resumption route for many former Australian citizens.

If you would like to request a copy of the SCG's Media Release for Australian Citizenship Day, please send an e-mail to info@southern-cross-group.org.

Best regards,

The Southern Cross Group Committee
www.southern-cross-group.org

info@southern-cross-group.org

If you did not receive this message directly from the Southern Cross Group, you may wish to subscribe to our free e-bulletin service by using the sign up button on our website.