



Australian Citizenship Council

New Citizenship Report Recommends Australian Compact

A new report on Australian citizenship recommending the adoption of an "Australian Compact" of seven basic civic principles was released in Sydney today.

The Australian Citizenship Council, headed by Sir Ninian Stephen, released its report, "Australian Citizenship for a New Century," which included 64 recommendations on citizenship matters.

"This report not only deals with matters relating to Australian citizenship in its legal sense, but also in the context of shared civic values that we all have in common," Sir Ninian said.

"The report considers the concept of Australian citizenship in the 21st Century and concludes it is an important unifying symbol that can do more to serve Australia and Australians.

"With the centenary of Federation next year, the Council looked at how Australian citizenship could be used to further unify society in the future," Sir Ninian said.

The concept of an Australian Compact, setting out shared values and commitments, is an attempt to identify core civic values that have evolved over time which all Australians respect.

The "Australian Compact" includes a commitment:

- To respect and care for the land we share;
- To maintain the rule of law and the ideal of equality under the law of all Australians;
- To strengthen Australia as a representative liberal democracy based on universal adult suffrage and on freedom of opinion;
- To uphold the ideal of Australia as a tolerant and fair society;
- To recognise and celebrate Australia as an inclusive multicultural society which values its diversity;
- To continue to develop Australia as a society devoted to the wellbeing of its people;
- To value the unique status of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Since it was introduced on Australia Day, 1949, Australian citizenship has been a great success story. Since then, more than 3.1 million migrants have taken out Australian citizenship," Sir Ninian said.

The Council believes that the rules for the grant of Australian citizenship are working well and there is no case for changing them.

There are a few instances where our citizenship law has become outdated and in these cases the Council has made some recommendations.

One recommendation in the report, which has been presented to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Philip Ruddock, for consideration by the Government, is that Australians who take up another citizenship should not automatically lose their Australian citizenship.

The report confirms the value and unifying force of Australian citizenship.

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