

Hon Philip Ruddock MP
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

___ May 2000

Dear Mr Ruddock,

Dual Nationality under the Australian Citizenship Act 1948

I am writing to express my concern at the present discrimination which exists in Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948*. Although around 4.4 million Australians legally have dual nationality, those who start from the base of having Australian Citizenship and acquire another Citizenship lose their Australian Citizenship.

This situation is inappropriate in an age of global mobility. Many Australians choose to live abroad for various reasons. Australians overseas represent a valuable network and resource for Australia. Furthermore, their commitment to Australia in no way diminishes due to the fact that they are not resident in Australia.

Allowing Australians to take on a second nationality without giving up their Australian Citizenship would make life considerably easier for many individuals.

I fully support the Australian Citizenship Council's recommendation that Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* be repealed, so that Australian Citizens over the age of 18 do not lose their Australian Citizenship on acquisition of another Citizenship.

I also agree with the Council's recommendation that the current provision of the *Act* which specifies that children born overseas must be registered as Australian Citizens by descent before they turn 18 years of age be extended to enable registration before a child turns 25 years of age. Young people should have an adequate period after reaching their majority to be able to decide for themselves whether they wish to apply for Australian Citizenship by descent.

I call upon the Government to introduce legislation to amend the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* to this effect without delay. Such amendments would be a fitting way for our nation to celebrate a century of Federation in 2001.

Yours sincerely,

cc: Hon John Howard MP, Prime Minister
Hon Kim Beazley, MP, Leader of the Opposition
Hon Con Sciacca MP, Shadow Minister for Immigration
Senator Andrew Bartlett, Australian Democrats (Immigration Portfolio)