

Senator The Hon. Kay Patterson

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister
for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs



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Ms Anne MacGregor
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- 7 FEB 2001

Dear Ms MacGregor

Thank you for your Email of 21 November 2000 to the Prime Minister, the Hon. John Howard MP, concerning Australian citizenship. Your letter has been referred to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Philip Ruddock MP. The Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

In your letter you raise the issue of dual citizenship, and in particular the case of Jelena Dokic. As you are aware, if a person migrates to Australia and takes out Australian citizenship, whether they retain their original citizenship is a matter for that country. Accordingly, a large number of Australian citizens, estimated to be around 4.4 million, do possess another citizenship in addition to their Australian citizenship.

I understand that in situations such as yours, Australian born citizens would lose their citizenship if they acquired that of another country. You may be interested to know that Australians who have lost their Australian citizenship in this way may be able to apply to resume Australian citizenship in certain circumstances. For further information on this matter please see the enclosed forms on loss and resumption of Australian citizenship.

I have noted your support for Recommendation 49 of the Australian Citizenship Council's report which proposes the repeal of Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* so that Australian citizens will not lose their Australian citizenship on acquisition of another citizenship. As you mention, the repeal of Section 17 was recommended by the Council in its report, *Australian Citizenship for a New Century*. Australians living both in Australia and overseas were given the opportunity to comment on the Council's report, and many chose to do so. The Government is now considering its response to the report.

Please be assured that this issue and all the others raised by the Australian Citizenship Council in its report are regarded by the Government as very important and are receiving serious and detailed consideration. When finalised, the Government will issue a press release and ensure its wide distribution including the placing of it on the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs website: www.immi.gov.au.

Thank you for your interest in Australian citizenship.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay Patterson", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Senator Kay Patterson