

Southern Cross Group E-Bulletin to Members

22 March 2001

Dear Southern Cross Group Friends,

After several months of silence from Canberra, we are pleased to report that the Government will shortly be announcing a response to the recommendations made by the Citizenship Council in its February 2000 report.

The key recommendation in that report was that Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* should be repealed. This provision takes away your Australian nationality when you acquire another citizenship. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock's announcement is expected around the end of April.

While we are heartened by the fact that the Citizenship Council's report has not simply been shelved by the current Government, we stress that we are unable to confirm at this time whether or not the Government has decided to accept the recommendation to repeal Section 17.

It may be that the Government is considering other policy responses. It is now important for us to send a clear message that any reform which does not include the repeal of Section 17 would be ill-advised and inappropriate.

Please support us in the final weeks before the Government's announcement by taking the time to e-mail, fax or write to the Minister for Immigration or the Prime Minister, and other Members of Parliament with this specific message.

Further details of the latest developments on this issue, including details of Mr Ruddock's response to a question at the National Press Club in Canberra on 21 March 2001, are up on our website, along with contact details for politicians:

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

The issue is still on the Government's agenda. Let us hope that our efforts will result in the full repeal soon.

John Russell/Anne MacGregor
For the Southern Cross Group Management Committee

Please forward this message on to any Australian in your e-mail address book who is concerned by this issue, both in Australia and overseas.