

Mr Philip Ruddock, MP  
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

6 July 2001

Dear Minister

### **IIA Submission on Dual Citizenship**

The Internet Industry Association is Australia's national Internet industry organisation. Our 350 members include telecommunications carriers, content creators and publishers, web developers; e-commerce traders and solutions providers; hardware vendors, systems integrators, banks, insurance underwriters, Internet law firms, ISPs, educational and training institutions, Internet research analysts, and a range of other businesses providing professional and technical support services. On behalf of its members, the IIA provides policy input to government and advocacy on a range of business and regulatory issues, to promote laws and initiatives which enhance access, equity, reliability and growth of the medium within Australia.

The IIA supports the repeal of s 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 for a number of reasons.

The Internet industry within Australia has for some time been subject to a talent drain to more attractive destinations overseas. Higher remuneration arising from the exchange rate differential between Australia and the US, for example, combined with a bigger market in which to develop, test and sell new technologies are key considerations in setting up offshore operations.

Combined with the exhausting travel regimen and family disruption, these factors ultimately force successful Australian executives to relocate. These economic and social considerations sometimes necessitate the assumption of foreign citizenship for unavoidable and legitimate business reasons. However such decisions should not be construed as acts of disloyalty to be reined in by policies which developed in a pre-globalised world economy.

In most, if not all cases, the renunciation of citizenship is a last resort undertaken at considerable angst to the relevant individual. It represents an act of rejection by Australia and sends the message that the person is not welcome home. Neither is warranted.

In practical terms, section 17 of the Act puts Australia at a comparative disadvantage compared to other advanced technology nations, which do allow dual citizenship, because it operates as a barrier to labour and capital mobility of those who are best able to contribute to the strengthening of the Australian information economy.

We therefore think that the future of our local internet industry would be assisted by a better repatriation of key personal who should not be subjected to these outdated strictures in the pursuit of their careers, particularly where it operates to the ultimate

detriment of our national skill and capital base. Among other things, we would like to see some of the 7500 Australians in Silicon Valley return home, and will publicly support any move by the Australian Government to relax the current restrictions.

I am happy to discuss this issue in more detail if that would assist your decision.

yours sincerely

[signed]

Peter Coroneos  
Chief Executive  
Internet Industry Association(IIA)  
Phone: +61 2 6232 6900  
PO Box 3986  
MANUKA ACT  
AUSTRALIA 2603

<http://www.iia.net.au>