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AT LAST, A PASSPORT TO DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Australians will be able to take foreign citizenship without losing their Australian citizenship in future. But the proposed Federal Government legislation is not retrospective and the change will not apply to anyone who has already forfeited their Australian citizenship.

The changes were announced in August by the Immigration Minister, Mr Ruddock after heavy lobbying by a number of groups following the Australian Citizenship Council's recommendation in May that the Government repeal the controversial

section 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 that prevents people from keeping Australian citizenship unless they have dual citizenship as a birth right.

New legislation still has to be drafted and the Southern Cross Group, which has been lobbying from the US, warned any Australians overseas who are contemplating taking another citizenship to wait until Section 17 is repealed before applying for other citizenships. Southern Cross also will continue to press for extension of the changes to former Australians who have lost their citizenship in the past.