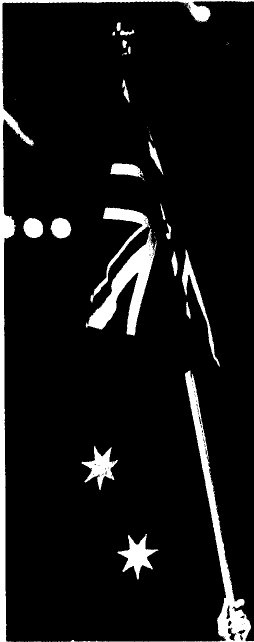


**News** from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa

# Dual citizenship allowed

Government to change law so citizens no longer have to forfeit passports



**CANBERRA:** The federal government last Friday changed laws which will allow Australians who take out foreign citizenship to retain their Australian citizenship.

But the changes will not apply to those who have already forfeited their Australian citizenship, nor is the legislation retrospective.

"The changes will benefit those Australians who acquire another citizenship after the new law is passed and comes into effect," Australia's Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock said.

But Ruddock's spokesman said there was already provision in place for media mogul Rupert Murdoch — who had to forfeit his Australian passport to get an American one — and others to reapply to be Australian citizens.

Whether or not they would be granted citizenship depended if they could demonstrate they were disadvantaged by the previous citizenship laws and were committed to living in

Australia again.

In announcing the move Ruddock effectively prevented dual citizenship from becoming an election issue, by matching the commitment to repeal Section 17 made by the federal opposition last year.

The opposition's immigration spokesman Con Sciacca said Ruddock's announcement did not come as a surprise, given lobbying of the minister had been "enormous".

The Government's Australian Citizenship Council recommended in May that the government repeal the controversial section of the 1948 Australian Citizenship Act.

Southern Cross Group founder John Russell said it was a step in the right direction, since the legislation still had to go through parliament and be implemented.

"Australians abroad will now be able to play a greater role in the countries in which they operate and return to Australia with valuable international expertise," he said.

