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Philip Ruddock MP

Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

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Australians to Retain Their Citizenship if They Acquire Another

MPS 109/2001

The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Philip Ruddock today confirmed the Government's decision to amend citizenship legislation to allow Australians who acquire another citizenship to retain their Australian citizenship.

"The Government will move to repeal section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* so that in future, Australians will no longer lose their citizenship if they acquire another citizenship," Mr Ruddock said.

This decision follows widespread community consultation over the last few years, undertaken initially by the Australian Citizenship Council and more recently by the Government through the release of a discussion paper.

Submissions to the Government were strongly supportive of the Government's preliminary decision in May this year to repeal section 17.

"We received over 800 public submissions since the release of the discussion paper and almost all submissions expressed support for the repeal of section 17," Mr Ruddock said.

"This change will allow the growing numbers of internationally mobile Australians to take advantage of opportunities overseas while maintaining their links with Australia and bringing back to the Australian community their valuable expertise and knowledge," Mr Ruddock said.

It will also bring Australia into line with the citizenship law of many other comparable countries, including the UK, Canada, New Zealand, USA, France and Italy.

Repeal of section 17 will form part of the legislative package implementing other Government endorsed recommendations of the Australian Citizenship Council.

The changes will benefit those Australian citizens who acquire another citizenship after the new law is passed and comes into effect. Until that time, Australians will continue to lose their citizenship if they acquire another.

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