

The Southern Cross Group

Promoting mobility in the global community



PRESS RELEASE

Australians Abroad Welcome Plans for Dual Nationality as “step in the right direction”

The Southern Cross Group (SCG) welcomes the Federal Government's announcement to repeal Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948*. This will mean once the amending legislation goes through parliament and comes into force, that those starting from a base of only Australian citizenship will be able to acquire a second citizenship without forfeiting Australian nationality.

The SCG, made up of Australians living and working across the globe, has campaigned strongly for Australia's citizenship laws to be modernized to allow Australians to operate more effectively in the global professional and business environment. Speaking from Brussels, SCG Co-founder, John Russell, said: “This represents a step in the right direction for Australia to become fully engaged in the global economy. 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.”

The announcement by the Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock means that, **after** the appropriate legislation is enacted, those with a base of only Australian citizenship will no longer be stripped of their Australian citizenship if they acquire the citizenship of another country. The SCG urges the Federal Parliament to adopt the amendment before rising for the election campaign and stresses once more that the actual amending legislation has **NOT** yet been adopted,

“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.” (from statement by Phillip Ruddock MP)

Some five million Australians already enjoy the privileges of dual citizenship. Today the government has demonstrated its commitment to grant equal treatment to the other three-quarters of Australian citizens and to no longer penalise Australians living abroad. It remains unfortunate that the individuals who have lost their citizenship in the past under section 17 will **NOT** benefit from the amending legislation.

The government's announcement today on dual nationality will bring Australia in line with most other western countries, including the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, Ireland, France, Italy and Canada, which have already moved in this direction. **+END+**

The Southern Cross Group is an international non-profit advocacy organisation seeking to speak for and work on behalf of the 820,000 Australians living and working overseas.

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