

The Southern Cross Group

Promoting Mobility in the Global Community



The Hon Gary Hardgrave, MP
Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

28 November 2001

Dear Mr Hardgrave,

The Southern Cross Group is an international non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to representing the interests of Australians overseas. Our membership includes Australians in many countries and we have a broad network of contacts with many Australian expatriate groups around the world. Recently we have been active in pursuing the repeal of Section 17 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* so that all Australians may have the right to dual citizenship. We were disappointed that the legislation introduced into the House on 23 August to repeal Section 17 lapsed when the election was called.

Many of our members were very heartened to read Mr Ruddock's letter to us dated 29 October 2001 in which he wrote that the Coalition is committed to pursuing the speedy reintroduction of the *Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment Bill* to achieve the repeal of Section 17 early in the term of the new Parliament. That letter has been posted to our website. We are also encouraged that for the first time Australia will now have a Minister for Citizenship, and that citizenship continues to be seen by the current government as a unifying force in Australia. We would comment that Australian citizenship is also a bond which unifies the expatriate community and links Australians overseas with Australians at home.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the concerns of Australian expatriates as they touch on your portfolio in more detail, and to provide you with a better understanding of the work of our organization, and some specific citizenship issues which some of our members face, which will not be remedied by the amending bill in the form introduced on 23 August. We will both be in Canberra during December, and wonder if a meeting could be scheduled at a mutually convenient time.

Anne MacGregor will be available in Canberra from Wednesday 5 December to Friday 14 December. During that time she can be reached at 02 6247 6952 or 0419 232 016 or by e-mail at anne@southern-cross-group.org. In addition, both the undersigned will be in Canberra on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 December. John Russell may be reached in Belgium until Friday 14 December at the address below or by e-mail at john@southern-cross-group.org.

We hope that there will be an opportunity for a meeting with you and look forward to a constructive dialogue with you during the term of the new Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Anne MacGregor / John Russell
SCG Co-founders
Washington DC and Brussels