

## **Lawyers can be good neighbours**

A senior associate at City giant Linklaters who spent years fighting for Australians working abroad to be given the right to dual citizenship is celebrating this week after the parliament in Canberra changed the law.

The move will make it easier for Australian lawyers to settle in England: many city firms have recruited heavily from the country to cover the shortage of English assistants.

Anne MacGregor, an Australian solicitor who is also qualified in England and Wales, co-founded lobby organisation the Southern Cross Group after becoming frustrated that Australians who emigrated would lose their citizenship if they applied to be naturalised in another country.

This meant that many forfeited basic rights - such as the right to vote - to keep their Australian passports, while others unwittingly lost their Australian status by adopting citizenship of other countries.

Ms MacGregor said she was "delighted" when the Australian government announced that the new legislation - which provides that Australians who have resided in another country for three years can apply for dual citizenship - had passed through both houses of parliament without amendment. However, it is not retrospective.

"It has been intensive, but it is worth it because now Australian people will feel more secure and more like a fully participating member of the country they have chosen to live in," she said.

Heather McIlwain, a fellow Australian associate at Linklaters, said she will strongly consider using the new law. "It increases the opportunities available - for example, being able to live in another country in the longer term - as well as giving a feeling that you have a stake in where you live," she said.

Paula Rohan