

Letters to the Editor

"Have Your Say"

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Citizen change welcome

Aussies able to take second citizenship

The probable imminent repeal of Section 17 of the 1948 Australian Citizenship Act is to be welcomed. So, too, are the wishes of the Southern Cross Group, which represents expatriate Australians who have already lost their citizenship and who are technically therefore not Australians any longer, to have the provisions for their resuming their citizenship made more lenient.

At most we are talking of two generations of up to 25,000 former Australians, i.e. 500-600 per year times 54 years since 1948, which is insignificant compared with the million British-born citizens who have migrated to Australia since 1948, become naturalised Australians in many cases and have no wish to return to the UK permanently. They can, though, enter the UK on a British passport and return to Australia on an Australian one.

The same ought to apply to these "lost" Australians, many of whom have settled abroad and find it humiliating to have to apply for a visa every time that they want to return to their native land to stay with family and visit friends.

When this bill is ratified, could the Government not include an amnesty to allow former Australians to resume their citizenship whether or not they want to return to live permanently in Australia?

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