

Southern Cross Group E-Bulletin to Members

9 April 2002

Royal Assent for Citizenship Change

Dear Southern Cross Group Friends,

We have just learned today from Canberra that the Governor-General gave Royal assent to the Act which repeals Section 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 on Thursday 4 April 2002.

This means that from 4 April 2002, any Australian citizen who takes another citizenship will not forfeit their Australian citizenship.

Apparently, following Royal assent, there are various administrative paperwork formalities which occur, which explains why even the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) in Canberra did not receive notice that Royal assent had taken place until today.

A press release by the Minister for Citizenship, the Hon Gary Hardgrave MP, has just been posted, and is accessible through our website at

<http://www.southern-cross-group.org>

Contrary to some reports which have appeared in the Australian media today and earlier, please note that anyone who lost their Australian citizenship while Section 17 was still in effect (i.e. prior to 4 April 2002) does NOT

automatically get their lost citizenship back as a result of this new change OR acquire a new right to suddenly apply for resumption of their lost citizenship. This change just means that no further Australians will lose their citizenship.

The Australian Citizenship Act 1948 already provides for the resumption of lost citizenship in certain circumstances, but the resumption rules remain unchanged at this time. If you have lost your citizenship, and you are still overseas, and you have no intention to return to live in Australia within 3 years, you cannot resume your Australian citizenship at this time. We have said we will continue to work for a more equitable resumption arrangement for past victims of Section 17. For further information see

<http://www.southern-cross-group.org/resumption.html>

Many thanks to everyone around the world who has written in to express their appreciation for the work the Southern Cross Group has done on this issue over several years. People have been asking us how they can support us and say thank-you. As you know, we are a completely non-profit organisation which runs entirely on volunteer efforts. We now belong to the Amazon Honor System, which makes it possible for you to make an online donation towards our work using a credit card. Click on the donation box on the left of our website, or go to <http://www.amazon.com/paypage/P1FISXMAZL35NH>

All donations will be used to offset our ongoing administrative expenses. More

information about how the Southern Cross Group is funded and supported is available at <http://www.southern-cross-group.org/funding.html>

Finally, for all those in the London area, don't forget our celebratory Australian Dual Citizenship Party on Tuesday 23 April 2002 - we look forward to meeting as many people as possible! A registration form can be downloaded from our website.

Best regards,

Ellie Palmer
Coordinator
The Southern Cross Group
Promoting Mobility in the
Global Community
Brussels, Belgium
<http://www.southern-cross-group.org>

ellie@southern-cross-group.org

Telephone during Belgian business hours: +32 2 743 4201

Fax: +32 2 230 1496

SCG

General Help Desk Telephone after hours: +32 2 736 80 32 (with voicemail)