

The Southern Cross Group

Promoting mobility in the global community



MEDIA RELEASE

Australian-Born Maltese Urged to Write to Canberra about their Children

The Southern Cross Group (SCG) is calling upon all Australian-born Maltese living in Malta, who previously renounced their Australian Citizenship, to write to Canberra regarding Australian citizenship for their children.

On 7 July 2004, Australian Minister for Citizenship the Hon Gary Hardgrave MP announced that Australian-born Maltese citizens who were forced to renounce their Australian citizenship as teenagers in Malta will soon be able to apply to resume it. The only requirement for resumption of Australian citizenship will be that the person is of good character. Approximately 2,000 Maltese fall into this category. The changes are expected to come into force some time in 2005.

But the reforms as announced on 7 July 2004 overlook the children born to these individuals. The SCG believes that these children should be given access to Australian citizenship too. If their Australian-born parent had not been forced to renounce Australian citizenship, they would now be Australian citizens by descent.

Those impacted are strongly urged to e-mail the Minister immediately using the specially prepared page on the SCG's website at:

www.southern-cross-group.org/minister.php

The SCG has also set up new pages on its website especially for Australian-born Maltese and their children in Malta to keep everyone up to date on developments in its campaign:

www.southern-cross-group.org/malta/overview.html

Those without internet access may phone or SMS their details to Norman Bonello on 79-468329 in order to receive an information pack by post.

The legislation needed to amend the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* to bring about the announced changes is still on the drawing board. It is hoped that a deluge of correspondence on the issue of children will prompt the Australian government to include Maltese children in the bill that is eventually tabled in Parliament.

For a full report of the SCG's continuing efforts since 2001 to help Australian-born Maltese regain their lost citizenship, including information on recent hearings before the Australian Senate's Inquiry into Australian Expatriates at which the matter of children was specifically raised by the SCG, see:

www.southern-cross-group.org/malta/latest.html

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The Southern Cross Group is an international, volunteer-run, non-profit advocacy and support organisation for the Australian diaspora.

www.southern-cross-group.org

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