

Media Release

John Cobb MP

Former Australian Government Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs

Minister Introduces Historic Changes to Citizenship Legislation

9 November 2005

The Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, John Cobb, today presented two Bills to the Parliament representing historic change to the Australian Citizenship Act 1948.

Mr Cobb said the changes provide for better structured, easier to understand citizenship law that reflects Australia in the 21st century.

'The principles underlying the legislation remain unchanged with the overall inclusive and non-discriminatory approach to Australian citizenship continuing as the basis for our citizenship law and policy,' Mr Cobb said.

'It was 57 years ago that the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 was passed by the Parliament. As a result, on Australia Day 1949, we became, for the first time, a nation of Australian citizens,' said the Minister.

'Since that time more than 3.5 million people, from over 200 countries, have chosen to become Australian citizens.

'They have eagerly grasped the opportunity to feel the sense of belonging, to make the commitment, to fully participate in our society and become one of us.

'The draft legislation encompasses changes announced in July 2004 and on 14 September 2005 and 19 September 2005.

'Australian Citizenship represents our shared values – acceptance, equality, freedom of speech and religion, the rule of law, Parliamentary democracy, our constitution and English as the national language.

'It is the bond that unites us all,' said the Minister.

For further information on Australian citizenship, contact the Citizenship Information Line on 131 880 or visit www.citizenship.gov.au.

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