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New hope of Australian citizenship for 3,000 Maltese

The Australian government is being urged to consider legislative changes to allow citizenship to around 3,000 Maltese whose parents, although born in Australia, renounced their Australian citizenship before their children were born.

The Southern Cross Group, an international volunteer-run and independently funded advocacy and support organisation for the Australian diaspora has written to Senator Christopher Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, expressing concern about this matter.

When in opposition, Labour had promised to amend the Australian Citizenship Act to make citizenship possible for this group of people.

The group is now asking the new government - elected last November - to make good on its pre-election promise.

“We have also written to all those MPs and senators who had spoken in Parliament in support of the inclusion of Maltese children in the new law when it was being enacted in 2006 and early 2007,” group co-founder Anne MacGregor told timesofmalta.com.

Ms MacGregor said the group had been informed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship that the department was preparing advice for the minister to seek his views on whether the new government wished to pursue legislative change on this issue.

“We are still hopeful that there is the political will under the new government in Canberra to make the required amendment to the Act so that approximately 3,000 children born in Malta with Australian-born parents will then have a direct route to Australian citizenship.”

Ms MacGregor said that since the new legislation came into effect on July 1 last year, all those Australian-born people in Malta who had to formally renounce their Australian citizenship before February 2000 in order to keep their Maltese citizenship as adults were able to apply to resume their Australian citizenship.

Many had done this and were now dual citizens.