

Southern Cross Group E-Bulletin to Members

9 September 2002

British Citizenship Reforms

As most recipients of this message will already be aware, Section 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 was repealed with effect from 4 April 2002. This means that any Australian citizen who takes on a non-Australian citizenship on or after that date no longer forfeits their Australian citizenship under Australian law, making dual citizenship possible for many expatriate Australians.

The information below will be of particular interest to Australians resident in the UK who are now in the process of, or considering applying for, British citizenship as a result of the recent legislative change in Australia outlined above. Please forward this message on to anyone you think may benefit from it.

On 9 September 2002, the UK Home Office announced that it had created a new independent group of experts to advise on reforms currently being undertaken to the British naturalisation process. To read the press release by Home Secretary David Blunkett, click on:

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/news.asp?NewsID=184>

The new group of experts will advise the British government on the content of courses for applicants for citizenship, the form of the new citizenship ceremony which will be introduced, and the conduct and implementation of a "Life in the United Kingdom" naturalization test.

Those who have been on the Southern Cross Group's e-bulletin list for some time will recall that on 7 February 2002, the Home Office released a White Paper outlining, among other things, proposed changes to British nationality and citizenship. The relevant chapter of that White Paper is available at:

http://www.southern-cross-group.org/archives/UK%20Citizenship%20and%20Immigration%20Law%20and%20Policy/Extract_UK_Home_Office_White_Paper_Chapter_2_Feb_2002.pdf

The Southern Cross Group made a submission to the Home Office in response to the White Paper on 21 March 2002:

http://www.southern-cross-group.org/archives/UK%20Citizenship%20and%20Immigration%20Law%20and%20Policy/SCG_Submission_to_UK_Home_Office_21_March_2002.pdf

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill, introduced into Parliament on 12 April 2002, will implement the legislative aspects of the proposed citizenship reforms. Part 1 of the Bill deals with nationality. That Bill is currently before the House of Lords. For the text of the Bill as amended in Committee at the end of July, see:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200102/ldbills/111/2002111.htm>

We will keep you updated on the progress of the Bill and forthcoming changes to UK naturalisation procedures.

Best regards,

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