

# They'll still call Australia home

Australians who take up another country's citizenship will be able to keep their Australian citizenship under a new law passed by federal parliament. The change is part of a revamp aimed at updating and strengthening Australia's citizenship law.

Previously, under section 17 of the Australian Citizenship Act, people lost their Australian citizenship if they sought and were granted citizenship of another country. The *Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment Act 2002* repeals section 17, allowing Australians to get dual citizenship.

Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs Minister, Gary Hardgrave, said the change will allow the growing numbers of internationally mobile Australians to take advantage of opportunities overseas, while maintaining their links with Australia and bringing back to the Australian community their valuable expertise and knowledge.

"It will also bring Australia into line with the citizenship law of many other comparable countries, including the UK, Canada, New Zealand, USA, France and Italy," Mr Hardgrave added.

The law preventing Australians from acquiring dual citizenship has been the subject of debate for some time.

An inquiry by parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee in 1976 recommended no change, concluding that people should only have one nationality. But a 1994 inquiry by parliament's Migration Committee recommended repealing section 17 on the grounds that it was outmoded and discriminatory.

A more recent review by the Australian Citizenship Council also called for the repeal of section 17 after widespread consultation indicated community support for the change.

The opposition supported the legislation, ensuring its smooth passage through parliament.

Shadow Immigration Minister, Laurie Ferguson, said that during the 1994 inquiry he had been persuaded by the mounting international trend towards dual citizenship and the reality that many Australians were adversely affected by the law as it stood.

Mr Ferguson also called on the government to liberalise the provisions that enable people who have lost their Australian citizenship to resume that citizenship.



Photo: Qantas

## Finding out about legislation

- The progress of bills can be checked from the Daily Bills List on the Internet at: [www.aph.gov.au/parlinfo/billsnet/blist.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/parlinfo/billsnet/blist.pdf)
- The text of bills and the explanatory memoranda which explain them are available on the Internet at: [www.aph.gov.au/parlinfo/billsnet/main.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/parlinfo/billsnet/main.htm)
- The debates on the legislation can be found on the Internet at: [www.aph.gov.au/hansard](http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard) ■

## Boys' education back on the agenda

An investigation into the education of boys is on again, after Education Minister Brendan Nelson asked the House of Representatives Education and Training Committee to resume the public inquiry commenced during the last parliament. Dr Nelson was chair of the inquiry when it first began. New Committee Chair, Kerry Bartlett (Member for Macquarie, NSW) is pleased that the committee will have the opportunity to complete the work commenced by his predecessor.

In April the House Education Committee visited Griffith (NSW) to hear more about the way boys are being educated and some of the difficulties they are experiencing. This included school visits so the committee could hear direct from students, teachers and school principals. The committee has already heard that in many areas the academic performance of boys is slipping behind that of girls. When the committee makes its recommendations, it will consider the submissions made and evidence given during the previous parliament, along with the new information it is now collecting. ■

### For more information

Visit: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt)

Phone: (02) 6277 2121

Email: [edt.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:edt.reps@aph.gov.au)

## Reserve Bank hearing in May

The House of Representatives Economics Committee will hold its next six-monthly public hearing with Reserve Bank Governor Ian Macfarlane and other representatives of the Reserve Bank in Sydney on 31 May 2002. The House Economics Committee hearing is a key event in Australia's financial calendar. For more information, phone: (02) 6277 4587 or email: [efpa.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:efpa.reps@aph.gov.au)

Updates on the Reserve Bank hearing will be provided on the House News web site at: [www.aph.gov.au/house/house\\_news](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/house_news) ■