

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to express my concerns over the Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and Other Measures) Bill 2017. When the announcement of proposed changes was made on 20/4/17, I was only 8 days away from submitting my application to become an Australian citizen and I was already in the process of preparing my application. I have been in Australia for almost 8 years and I was granted permanent residency in April last year.

The proposed changes include a retrospective application that covers all citizenship applications submitted on and after 20/4/2017, which is the date of announcement. The announcement was sudden and many applicants like myself are now experiencing extreme distress due to the uncertainty of our future. Tens of thousands of people planned their work, travel, and education according to existing policies. In my case, compounding with the recent proposal to stop permanent residents from accessing Commonwealth Supported Places at universities, it would completely disrupt my future plan if my citizenship application were to be delayed for another 3 years as my \$75,000 degree could potentially cost \$250,000. The career pathways of many other existing migrants are also adversely affected as many jobs, enlistment in Australian Defence Force, and travel arrangements would require Australian citizenship and/or passport. In 2007, when the residency requirement was changed for citizenship application, a transitional period, which allowed citizenship applications of the existing permanent resident visa holders to be assessed basing on the previous rules, was in place to minimize impact on existing permanent residents. **I strongly urge the Government to amend the bill to include transitional provisions for existing permanent residents.**

In addition, the Government suggests that, changing the residency requirement from 4 years with a minimum of 1 year permanent residency to 4 complete years as a permanent resident, would increase time for social integration and more time to assess the applicants. Approximately 50,000 people in Australia, who signed various petitions online (change.org and aph.gov.au) against this change, and I beg to differ. Under current legislations, one has to live in Australia for 4 years minimum before submitting their application for citizenship. 4 years is a reasonable amount of time for social integration regardless of visa class. Many people come to Australia on temporary visas and have lived in Australia for 4 or more years. The proposed changes will disadvantage and cause unnecessary delay for those people who have spent many years on temporary visas before obtaining permanent residency - in

my case, I would have to wait for 11 years in total - while someone comes to Australia on a permanent residency visa will only have to spend 4 years before becoming eligible for citizenship. Therefore, the argument that the change will better integration is invalid. **I recommend the government to keep the current residency requirement.**

Thank you very much for your time!