

## **SUBMISSION NO. 513**

### **Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration**

An earlier submission (#403) made a number of points which, I think, require some comment:-

1. The submission seemed to be suggesting that migrants require assistance with purchasing a home additional to that provided by the First Home Owner Grant. However, it should be borne in mind that migrants who owned their own home overseas would have an advantage compared with other Australians in that they would qualify for the Grant despite having what might be considerable funds at their disposal from the sale of the property overseas (or owning it as an investment property). Any further assistance would probably raise questions as to why migrants deserve better treatment than other first home buyers.
2. The submission advocated tax deductions for the travel costs of new migrants who return to visit relatives in their country of birth. Apart from the difficulty of defining just what costs should be deductible (for instance, if the migrant visited relatives in countries other than the one of their birth and how many trips should be deductible) I think many Australians would have difficulty accepting such special treatment. As a migrant myself who did not visit his 'homeland' for 32 years after arriving in Australia, and who certainly did not expect any taxpayer assistance in that regard, I think migrants have to accept the need to make a home here, not overseas. If some migrants are so fragile or homesick that they have a strong need to return 'home' frequently they (and the Australian authorities) should be questioning whether they should be coming to Australia in the first place.
3. A further indication was that migrants should be able to claim an income tax deduction for money they send to relatives overseas. The tax offset available to taxpayers in respect of Australian resident parents and invalid relatives is presumably granted as such taxpayer support is assumed to take some pressure off the Australian Social Security and Health systems. Apart from that, there would be the problem of trying to verify the claims for payments sent overseas, particularly where the claim depends upon a level of disability of the recipient.

Hopefully, the Committee will be mindful of the range of special benefits already available to migrants from Federal, State and local government sources before recommending a raft of new ones.

**P B**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012**