

10th January, 2006

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

**Inquiry into the provisions of the Australian Citizenship Bill
2005 and the Australian Citizenship (Transitionals and
Consequential) Bill 2005**

I would like to express my concerns about the proposed changes in citizenship legislation. The government's proposal for an increase of 12 months in residency requirement from 2 years to 3 years is widely considered as reasonable. However, the effective date will be of critical importance to the people who were already in the waiting period when the proposed change was first announced. The new legislation may mean to some permanent residents, who may have only a couple of months or even a few days short of 2 years before the commencement of new requirements, to wait another long year to become eligible for citizenship application.

There are many of them who had made their plans for settlement, further studies, works and their families in Australia on the basis of existing legislation. A sudden change will definitely create hardship to those people and will wreck their original plans. The proposed change in residency requirement was first announced by Prime Minister Howard on 8th September, 2005, people who had arrived before that date could only have planned their settlement on the basis of existing legislation.

I would ask the parliament to be more sympathetic to the people caught by this change of residency requirements by setting a fair commencement date for the new residency requirements so as not to bring hardship to the people already in the waiting period when the change was first announced in Sep 2005. I would consider such a fair commencement date can be in Sept. 2007.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully,

Phil Wong