

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We welcome the the new Citizenship Bill as it puts Australia on par with the rest of the First World.

However, we would like to express our concern regarding one of the proposed changes in the legislation.

We do think that provision needs to me made for people that arrived in Australia as Permanent Residents before the Bill is made Law.

We became Permanent Residents in January 2004, then returned to our present country of residence (United Arab Emirates) in order to settle our financial dues before the final move to our new country. We don't want to be in dire straits and face hardships when we move to Australia for good. Our timing for coming to Australia included consideration of the two years residency requirement so as to be able to become citizens sooner rather than having to wait even longer.

I believe that people who are Permanent Residents before the new Bill comes into place should still only have to reside there for two years, as was the Law when they became PRs (which would only be fair).

If this increase were to be in any way effective in preventing undesirables gaining citizenship, or in preventing terrorist activities, then we could accept its necessity. However, we are far from convinced that another year would have any effect whatsoever other than making life more difficult for the vast majority - the law abiding prospective citizen.

I would like to add that also New Zealand excluded the Permanent Residents when they issued a new citizenship legislation.

We ask that the commission reconsider this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully,

Gabriel and Maria Pana

Abu Dhabi
U.A.E.