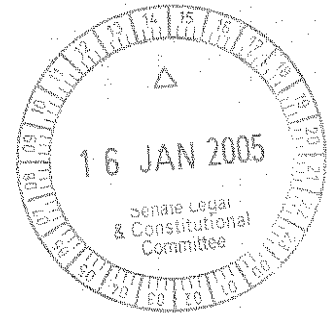


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16 January 05

Subject: Submission on the Australian Citizenship Bill 2005

To the Secretary

On behalf of the Liberian Community of South Australia Inc (LICOSA)

I am very please to receive a letter regarding the Australian Citizenship Bill 2005 and Australian Citizenship (Transitionals and Consequentials) Bill 2005. The sending of this letter proves Australian government commitments towards more vibrant, multicultural and harmonious society. I think the concerns for amending the Bill and making some changes are fundamental for the protection of Australians, its citizenship and further strengthening the security of our great Multicultural nation. I believe this value and view is shared by all patriotic Australians. Some of these changes and amendments could impact significantly to the betterment of the Australian society and I believe it is vital for the government and the oppositions to put these in place as soon as possible.

Having said all the above and I believe my above statements are real. I recommend for the government to have a close look at the vulnerabilities, difficulties and bad experiences face by many refugees before arriving in Australia and even upon arrival in Australia. I would like to appeal to all the members of parliament to either reduce the period of citizenship or to leave it at the two years period for humanitarian refugees and family reunion entrances in Australia. The reasons to appeal on this specific case are: There is nothing valuable and important for refugees than getting the Australian citizenship as soon as possible. Most refugees have been out of their own countries of

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origin for years with out the hope of returning due to the fear of war, torture, persecution, maltreatment, violence and Human Rights abuses. These refugees want to have a taste and the flavour of being at home or being welcome as citizen in their new country such as Australia. Through my own personal experience there was nothing more important to me in my first two Years in Australian than obtaining my citizenship. Upon receiving my citizenship I personally feel liberated and welcomed by the Australian society. It also has made me think that I have a new country of origin where I can contribute valuably. Since my citizenship ceremony my feeling to love Australia has increase dramatically, I feel very close internally to the Australian society due to the generosity of granting me an Australian citizenship. This view is also shared by all my community members and other humanitarian entrance in our daily conversations.

The second reason is: Nearly all humanitarian entrances or offshore refugees are verified and screened by other agencies including UNHCR and the Australian Immigration Officers before their approval for entrance in Australia. These are people who just want to get a safe country to live with hope and security.

To end my statement on behalf of the Liberian community of South Australian Inc any extension in the citizenship period would psychologically and mentally affect members of my community and other humanitarian refugees in Australia. As a result most people would lose the sense of welcoming and belonging in a country described by many humanitarian entrances as "small heaven" for refugees in terms of the government policies on such of issues.

I hope this submission is taken in to serious consideration base on humanitarian ground

Yours truly,



Ibrahim Jabateh

Chairman of Liberian Community of South Australia Inc