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To: The Secretary
 Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee
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Submission to Inquiry into Australian Expatriates

Dear Sir/Madam,

I was born in Melbourne, *Victoria*, Australia on the 20th June 1955. My mother and father migrated to Australia from Malta in 1955. As a child I enjoyed dual citizenship: I was Australian by birth under Australian law and Maltese by descent under Maltese law. In December 1969, when I was fourteen years old, my family moved back to Malta. Under Maltese citizenship law I was required to decide between Maltese and Australian citizenship between my 18th and 19th birthdays.

Prior to amendments which took effect on 10 February 2000, Maltese citizenship law did not allow dual citizenship in adulthood. I was required by the Maltese citizenship authorities to present documentary evidence that I had formally renounced my Australian citizenship under Australian law using Section 18 of the *Australian Citizenship Act 1948*, in order to keep my Maltese citizenship beyond my 19th birthday. I opted to keep Maltese citizenship in adulthood due to the fact that life in Malta for me without Maltese citizenship would have been extremely difficult. In particular as I was employed in the Public Service, my parents were living in Malta and at 18 I was too young to leave all behind and leave Malta.

At the time that I renounced my Australian citizenship I did so only because I felt compelled and essentially had no choice in the circumstances. I was extremely unhappy about forfeiting my Australian citizenship, because I was born in Australia, spent my formative years there and still consider myself to be "Australian" today, I still **feel** Australian even if I am not legally an Australian citizen. Australian citizenship is my birth right because I was born in Australia.

The *Australian Citizenship Act 1948* contains a provision whereby those who lost their Australian citizenship under the now repealed Section 17 may resume their lost citizenship, as long as they are able to state an intention to return to Australia to live within three years.

I feel it is inequitable to deny those who lost their Australian citizenship under Section 18 the same resumption right, when the 2002 repeal of Section 17 signals that Australia as a country now accepts dual citizenship as

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sound policy for the 21st century.

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