



To:-
The Secretariat
Senate legal and Constitutional Committee

From:-
Elizabeth Squier

Stowe, Vermont, USA.

February 10th, 2004.

To whom it may concern-

Recently, the Southern Cross Group has been encouraging ex-patriot Australians to write to your commission on matters of importance to them.

I wish to submit my story in hopes that those of us who have lost our Australian passports because we took other countries' citizenship, will now be allowed to regain our citizenship, passport and identity, particularly in light of the fact that these rules might no longer apply if we were to do the same thing to-day.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Squier". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

A PLEA TO REGAIN CITIZENSHIP.

Even having lived more of my life in the United States of America than in Australia, not a day goes by when I don't think about re-connecting with my homeland. My roots in Australia stretch back to the mid 1800's when Patsy Durack took the family from the goldfields of Goulbourne into western Queensland, where my branch settled and many still live on the land. I was born in Brisbane in 1948 and grew up on a sheep property in Glen Innes, northern NSW, then moved to Sydney at 21 to work. It was the Viet Nam war, and Sydney was full of American servicemen on "rest and recreation". I married one of them - we lived in Sydney, worked, bought a house and began a family. I assumed we would stay there forever, but in 1973 my husband's father decided to retire, so we come to Vermont, took the family business, and I started a sheep farm.

My husband departed, leaving me to raise our children. However, as time went on the U.S. government was pressuring long-term 'aliens' such as myself to become U.S citizens. Having no partner to protect me from possible deportation, and the fear of losing child custody, I became a US citizen.

My life now as a 56 year old is much more secure. The children have grown. I remarried, and fortunately we are financially well-off. Now my hope and dream is to regain Australian citizenship. I have re-visited at least 10 times since leaving and have always retained close relationships with friends and family, including people I went to school with, bridesmaids, many relatives from Queensland to Western Australia, and a whole new generation of young family members who come and visit over here. But, the biggest magnet is my son Sandy who has lived and worked in Sydney for several years, has married, and plans to stay in Australia.

Since living in the U.S. I have always been an ambassador for my homeland. The farm was open to the public for afternoon tea, and when the sheepdogs rounded up their charges I would tell audiences from all over the world about life and farming in Australia. Every January we host a Australia Day banquet with homegrown legs of lamb and pavlova. Ex-patriot Australians come for a day of feasting, poetry - and snowshoeing in sub-zero temperatures. For 10 years I have hosted a weekly radio program broadcast over 4 stations, and recently have been telling listeners Australia's position on the Free Trade Agreement, countering local arguments (hysteria) that it will put 150,000 US dairy farmers out of business.

Now, my hope is to regain citizenship, spend more time in Australia, buy a small place so our family can be united -and once again listen to the magpies sing at sunrise.

February 9th, 2004

Elizabeth Squier.