

Oreste Gauci  
Marsascalea  
Malta

Dear Sir/Madam;

I was born in Melbourne, Australia on the 29th August 1963. My parents emigrated to Australia from Malta in the early months of the year 1963, and so I was an Australian by birth and Maltese by descent.

In the year 1976, when I was 12 years old, my parents decided to move back to Malta. Under Maltese Law, I was required to decide between Maltese and Australian citizenship between my 18th and 19th Birthday. 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 very difficult : that is not being able to get free education, not being permitted to work, let alone join the Maltese Armed Forces- my present job.

When I renounced my Australian citizenship, I did so only because I felt I had no choice at the time. I was very unhappy about forfeiting my Australian citizenship, because I was born in Australia, spent my formative years there and still consider myself to "Australian" today, even if I am not legally an Australian citizen. My parents insisted that we be part of the social activities in our suburb of Collingwood, and we were involved in helping the Salvation Army by fund raising and also joining in Local Council activities. Also, school left an impact on me and on my way of thinking, which makes me different from most Maltese and left a positive effect in my adulthood.

My brother lives in Australia, residing at  
and is

My sister, , also lives in Australia, precisely at  
, as so do most of my relatives - Aunts, Uncles and  
cousins, with whom I keep constant contact.

I strongly believe that it was unfair to lose my Australian citizenship under section 18, even more so, when Section 17 states that Australia now accepts dual citizenship as a policy for the 21st Century. Australian-born Maltese are being discriminated against, under Australian Law, simply because Maltese Law at the time required a section 18 renunciation when the citizenship laws of other countries did not.

I would like for you to note, that Australian Law was amended with effect from 1st July 2002 to enable people who lost their Australian citizenship to retain another citizenship to apply to resume the Australian citizenship to the age of 25. However, this provision does not assist me, because I was over the age of 25 on 1 July 2002.

Regardless of all this, I will always consider myself to be an Australian, and while appreciating your efforts, I thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully

Oreste Gauci