

## **Submission on Paths to Permanent Residence for New Zealanders living in Australia**

Firstly, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this topic, of which is a very important matter to our family.

I am a New Zealand citizen whom has lived in Australia since 2005 and have an occupation in the current skills list. I have spouse, whom is not a New Zealand citizen (Brazilian) on a 461 visa — 5 year temporary visa and a daughter whom was born here and is "Australian", in all but name.

I have considered going down the skilled migrant path (as a family), to give my wife access to Medicare and other benefits but this is proving to be extremely difficult. This has come about because I worked as an IT contractor in the UK for some 7 years and meeting Australian Computing Society documentation requirements is proving to be almost impossible. This is because the ACS does not recognise documents from Recruitment agencies and most of the companies I worked only keep HR records of permanent staff and others no longer exist as they were of the dotcom era. This puts my application right on the "margins" and meeting all of their criterion is doubtful.

Naturally after spending some time in the UK in specialised IT fields for some seven years, we felt Australia, particularly, Sydney offered the best career choices, as London and Sydney have the most similar IT markets.

Living in Australia on an ongoing temporary basis is highly "unsettling" for me and my family, especially my wife. However we were offered some hope, earlier in the year, when Julia Gillard and John Key came out and said, the situation would be reviewed and long term New Zealand citizens living in Australia would be given a path to citizenship and could thus stop living as "second class" citizens. Since this was said, the skilled migrant program has become even more difficult.

I note Australians living in New Zealand are able to apply for residency after two years, as I understand. This situation seems highly unequitable, especially given our close cultural and historical ties and is certainly not in the "ANZAC spirit". I also note Australia has signed up to a UN human rights convention, where all residents are "equitable" and entitled to equal welfare as taxpayers and should not be discriminated against on the basis of birth place. I find this situation, frustrating and in fact quite bizarre, given we are able to reside here "indefinitely" in either case.

I read your white paper with keen interest and it seemed to suggest some sort of "stand down" period for residence would be most appropriate. This would seem to be fair enough, however your paper did not cover spouses or family members of New Zealand citizens. I would like to suggest it would be most appropriate this could be done on a family basis, like most other residency visa applications.

I know of three other couples in the same situation, all skilled and spent time in the UK and have met partners from a third country and came to the same conclusion, that Australia offered the best career prospects. This is probably more common than most people realise as skilled young people tended to gravitate to Europe for career and travel. Many were single and Europe offered excellent career opportunities, however as time passed they met partners and considered life nearer to home as a more "family friendly" environment. Most of us being motivated and skilled would without doubt be the most desirable in the migrant communities.

All I ask is you give us equal footing as a Family on the basis of obtaining residency, as we are probably some of the most desirable, but miss out on the most benefits, because our spouses miss out on all benefits, including Medicare, which is a significant cost and yet as couples we would be higher tax payers than average citizens.

Given this a reasonable backdated “stand down” period for the whole direct family of a NZ Citizen for residency would be fair and the most appropriate path to longer term family stability in Australia.