

SUBMISSION

REQUESTS

1. That the Australian Government remove or ease the current restrictions imposed on New Zealand citizens due to the changes to migration and citizenship laws which took effect on 26 February 2001 following the changes to the Social Security Act.
2. That the definition of “eligible New Zealand citizens” be extended to New Zealand citizens who arrived in Australia after 27 February 2001 and have lived in Australia for a period of 2 years or more.
3. We understand that our above requests were discussed by the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Hon. John Key and our Prime Minister, Hon. Malcolm Turnbull last year and, if so, we further request the Australian Government gives priority in implementing it.

REASONS SUPPORTING OUR REQUESTS:

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(i) **Majority of Samoans living in Australia are New Zealand citizens.**

We have estimated at least 90% of Samoans currently living in Australia are New Zealand citizens. Due to the mutual relationship between New Zealand and Samoa, New Zealand relaxed its migration laws and open its doors for the Samoans to migrate to New Zealand. This relationship was established in the 1950s and is still in place at the moment. As a result, many Samoan migrate and raised families in New Zealand for decades.

(ii) **Pattern of Migration to Australia and the number (population) of Samoans in Australia.**

The Samoans started to arrive in Australia from New Zealand in the mid 1980s but in small numbers.

It was not until the mid 1990s that saw significant arrivals which has continued until now despite the current restrictions preventing them from becoming Australian citizens or “eligible New Zealand citizens”.

The majority of Samoans and people with Samoan backgrounds have settled in NSW especially in the Sydney Metropolitan area. However, many are now settling in other states and major regional towns like Newcastle, Griffith, Orange etc and the ACT.

The real number of Samoans and people with Samoan background currently living in Australia is difficult to find due to their citizenship status as they are classified as New Zealand citizens. However, we have estimated the number of Samoans currently living in Australia is about 50,000 or

more. Our estimate is based on the membership of established Samoan Churches and other Samoan religious organisations in NSW and the ACT.

(iii) **Number of Samoans affected by the current restrictions:**

Given that the rate of arrivals of people with Samoan background from New Zealand increased rapidly between 2000 and 2016 and taking into account those who arrived under proper and legal sponsorships, we have estimated about 30% or 15,000 are affected.

2. **WHAT THE PEOPLE WITH SAMOAN BACKGROUND FROM NEW ZEALAND BRING TO AUSTRALIA**

Due to the fact that people with Samoan background lived and worked in New Zealand for many years and their children were educated and also worked over there before they migrated here, they bring with them a wide range of assets which can only benefit Australia economically, socially and culturally which are the areas highlighted in points (01) and (04) of the White Paper Guide. In addition, the removal of the current restrictions will further improve and consolidate the relationship between New Zealand and Australia thus benefitting both countries in terms of trade, businesses etc. as emphasised in point (04) of the Guide.

Specific attributes of the Samoans from New Zealand which are of great benefit to Australia are:

(i) **Experienced “Blue collar workers”:**

Their experience gained from working in New Zealand in blue collar work are valuable asset that many Australian companies are enjoying.

(ii) **White collar workers:**

The majority if not all, of the young and middle age people with Samoan background now living in Australia were born, educated and worked in New Zealand. Their qualifications and experience which range from clerical work to administrative positions are now being utilised by companies, organisations and Government departments in Australia.

(iii) **Skilled and qualified Tradesmen and Technicians:**

Since New Zealand and Australia adopt similar course and training requirements in many trades and technical positions, Australia has gained valuable assets which are very important in the development of the Manufacturing Industry and other fields. Most important of all, there was no financial cost imposed on the Australian tax payers to train these valuable tradesmen and technicians.

(iv) **People with Tertiary Qualifications (Professional Personnel):**

There is a large number of people with Samoan background who studied and received their tertiary qualifications in New Zealand and are now working and practising in Australia. They include Teachers, Nurses, Doctors, and Solicitors etc. Again, The Australian Government (Federal and States) or the Australian tax payers did not bear any financial cost for these people to gain their qualifications.

(v) **Small business operators:**

There is a significant number of small businesses currently operated by the Samoans from New Zealand in Australia especially in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. The majority of them if not all, gained their experience and business skills in New Zealand and when they came to Australia they brought with them not only those attributes but also the necessary capital to start small businesses. The most noticeable operations are in the tourism, freight, food, fashion and in the service industry such as funeral parlours.

The contributions to the Australian economy by these small operations run by the Samoans from New Zealand is unquestionable knowing that the small businesses have always been a major and important sector in the economic development of Australia especially in terms of employment.

(vi) **Sports men and women:**

Samoans, like Australians, are sport orientated people. Many especially those who were born and raised in New Zealand, excelled themselves in many sports and reached the top by representing New Zealand in Rugby Union, Rugby League, Net/Basketball and other fields. This is very true in Australia where many men and women with Samoan background are now playing for the Australian National teams and State teams. Players like Christian Lealiifano, Scott Sio, Digby Ioane, Tim Cahill, Allan Alaalatoa, Palaamo, Peter Betham, Tumua and many others have either played or are still playing in the National teams namely the Wallaby, Socceroos and the National Volley ball team. There is no doubt that these sportsmen wear their Australian jerseys with pride.

(vii) **Cultural Input:**

Although the people with Samoan background have accepted and adopted “western” culture and practices, they still manage to hold on to the Polynesian and the Samoan culture where the extended family unit is very important. Sharing of achievements and sad occasions by extended family members is paramount in the lives of the Samoan people.

In the areas of cultural entertainment and food, the Samoans are always proud to exhibit their talents and thus making a vital contribution in enriching the multicultural mix which Australia has been experiencing with pride.

(viii) **Christian ethics and values:**

It's a fact that all Samoans uphold and practised Christian principles. This is traced back in the early 1830s when John Williams brought Christianity to Samoa. Every Samoan either believe or belong to a particular religious establishment. Where ever the Samoan people settle and live there will be churches and religious organisations set up and it is now being witnessed in the major cities like Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra and major Regional centres in NSW and Queensland. By holding and practising these Christian ethics and values, Australia will benefit in that harmony and caring for others are some of the positive outcomes.

(ix) **Speak and understand English language**

All Samoans currently living in Australia can speak and understand English. Many are very fluent in both spoken and written English. This is due to the fact that in Samoa and in New Zealand, Samoan families speak both Samoan and English in their homes. This aspect is naturally a big advantage to companies, departments and organisations when they want to employ new employees and staff.

3. **CONSEQUENCES IF THE EXISTING RESTRICTIONS ARE NOT REMOVED OR REMOVAL IS DELAYED**

Given the benefits and the valuable contributions that people with Samoan background from New Zealand put in the economic and social development of Australia as outlined above, the cost and the consequences are enormous if the current restrictions on those New Zealand citizens who arrived after the 27th February 2001 are delayed or not removed. These include:

- (i) Those affected will live their daily lives with uncertainty not knowing what the future hold for them and their children in Australia.
- (ii) Businesses, Government Departments and Organisations in Australia may miss the opportunity of utilising experienced, skilful and highly qualified employees as those affected may decide to leave Australia.
- (iii) Australian companies and various levels of Governments will have to cover the costs of educating and training people to fill gaps in the work force which could have been easily filled by the New Zealand citizens who are affected by the restrictions on their migration status.

4. **CONCLUSION**

We sincerely believe and convince that we have put our case clearly and appropriately in our submission. We also believe and convince that the facts we have put forward are strong enough to demonstrate the economic and social benefits that Australia will gain by the prompt removal of the current restrictions. As we emphasised, the removal of these restrictions will not only improve and consolidate the relationship between Australia and New Zealand but it will also relay a positive image of Australia as a country of true multicultural society. The two years we have suggested is a period that we feel is long enough to measure peoples intention to live here and call Australia home.

We trust that our input is of some help to your team and that our requests are considered favourably and will be reflected in the final outcome.

SPECIAL NOTE:

You will notice that in some parts of our Submission we use the term “New Zealand citizens” in general. It is definitely not our intension to speak for all New Zealand citizens as we feel that it is the responsibility of the New Zealand Government and other relevant authorities. As our Organisation is for the Samoans living in Sydney our submission is therefore representing the interest of those people with Samoan background who are New Zealand citizens and arrived in Australia after the 27th February 2001.

