



## OZ KIWI MEDIA RELEASE

17<sup>th</sup> February 2016

### John Key and Malcolm Turnbull meet in Sydney

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February the New Zealand Prime Minister will visit Sydney to meet with his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull. Oz Kiwi wants the issues facing New Zealand residents of Australia to be on the agenda at this meeting.

Since 26<sup>th</sup> February 2001 New Zealanders arriving in Australia enter on a Special Category Visa (SCV) which entitles them to work and live in Australia indefinitely, and purchase property here. However, the SCV does not provide an avenue for citizenship, or access to many government services, even though they pay the same taxes as everyone else.

Many SCV New Zealanders are also excluded from accessing student loans, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, and some insurances. New Zealanders are even barred from applying for jobs in the Australian Defence Force.

Post February 2001 arrivals are also denied access to the National Disability Scheme (NDIS), despite paying the NDIS levy as part of their taxes. The recent case of seven-year-old Toby Bensemann, born prematurely in Sydney in 2008 and diagnosed with autism, highlights the issue. Toby's New Zealand-born parents pay the NDIS levy yet he will not be eligible for support under NDIS, when the scheme is rolled out. Toby has received intervention under the current disability support services. Oz Kiwi is aware of a number of Australian born children like Toby who are also being unfairly denied support.

Over recent months the incarceration of New Zealanders in Australian immigration detention has been widely publicised. While there are cases where deportation is warranted, Oz Kiwi is concerned about the arbitrary manner in which current laws are being applied including in relation to those who have committed minor offences or no offence at all, those with old convictions, and those who have lived in Australia since childhood. To date an estimated 60 per cent of the 600 permanent resident visa cancellations have been New Zealanders.

One very high profile case concerns Ko Haapu, a decorated former New Zealand serviceman, once a bodyguard for Prime Minister John Key in Afghanistan. Detained after visiting a gang member in prison, Haapu has never been convicted of any crime, nor is he accused of committing any crime. Yet he has been detained in Casurina Super maximum Prison for over three months, since 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015.

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