



OZ KIWI MEDIA RELEASE

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Kiwis take concerns to Parliament

A group advocating for New Zealanders living in Australia will present a petition to Parliament next week calling for the government to accord the same rights to Kiwis living in Australia.

The petition has been signed by 37,963 people who want the government to allow Kiwis in Australia to apply for citizenship or be eligible for the same benefits as other permanent residents.

New Zealanders arriving in Australia receive what is called a Special Category Visa (SCV) which entitles them to work and live in Australia and be able to buy or sell a house, but most cannot apply for citizenship or access many government services even though they pay the same taxes as everyone else.

Some of these services include access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, student loans, unemployment benefit, disability benefits, insurance and applying for jobs in the Australian Defence Force.

Oz Kiwi chairman Timothy Gassin says hundreds of people write to the group every week desperate for help.

“New Zealanders living in Australia can’t get the unemployment benefit or any help if they or their partner or children become disabled, even if their spouse is an Australian.

“They would apply for citizenship if they could but the laws at the moment prevent Kiwis from doing this. In the end, it is a raw deal for Kiwis living in Australia. This is unfair as we all pay our taxes with some of us living in Australia for over 20 years,” Mr Gassin said.

Mr Gassin said Australians who move to New Zealand are treated more fairly.

They’re able to vote after one year, apply for citizenship after five years and receive all benefits in times of hardship and sickness.

“Where is the New Zealand in ANZAC? Equality and fairness is all we are asking for, please give us a fair go.

Oz Kiwi will present the petition to Parliament and the group will also meet with senators and parliamentarians from Monday June 15-24 to present their concerns.

For more information or interviews contact Tim Gassin tim@ozkiwi2001.org