



## OZ KIWI MEDIA RELEASE

22 August 2016

### Oz Kiwi takes deportation concerns to New Zealand politicians

The not for profit group Oz Kiwi, advocating for New Zealanders living in Australia, will be in Wellington on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> of August to meet with:

- senior New Zealand Labour MPs, including Leader Andrew Little and Deputy Leader Annette King;
- Marama Davidson, Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand spokesperson for Maori Development, Social Housing, Human Rights & Pacific Peoples; and
- officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

One of Oz Kiwi's major concerns is the growing number of New Zealanders being held in Australian immigration detention and the lack of expedient processing of their deportation. Detainees and their families have told Oz Kiwi that people are held in detention for six to ten months, sometimes longer, waiting for their paperwork to be completed. This does not include any separate deportation appeal application.

New Zealanders arriving in Australia enter on a temporary Special Category Visa (SCV) which entitles them to live and work in Australia indefinitely, but does not provide an avenue to citizenship. As non-citizens residing in Australia, if convicted of a crime and sentenced to 12 months or more, they face deportation to New Zealand.

Changes to s501 of the Migration Act in December 2014 saw the threshold for visa cancellation reduced from 24 to 12 months with the amendment applied retrospectively and cumulatively i.e. lesser sentences and historic convictions can be tallied to meet the threshold 12 months. Many are being deported for minor, non-violent offences.

While s501 is not specifically aimed at New Zealanders, they are disproportionately affected given the large number of Kiwis living in Australia who either have not taken out citizenship or simply are not eligible to. It is estimated that at least 200,000 Kiwis reside in Australia as temporary SCV holders with yet more being PR.

As at 30 June 2016 there were 199 Kiwis in Australian immigration detention, and New Zealanders now make up the largest national group. Many are being deported for minor non-violent offences not deserving of such a harsh penalty, particularly those who have lived in Australia since childhood, with Australian partners and family members.

<http://www.border.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/immigration-detention>

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\* New Zealand mobile, only contactable between Monday 22 August and Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> August.