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THE HON ALEX HAWKE MP

MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, MIGRANT SERVICES AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

MEDIA RELEASE

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INCREASED FLEXIBILITY FOR CITIZENSHIP APPLICANTS

Today the Government has announced changes that will streamline the pathway to citizenship for some of our most talented prospective Australians.

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, Alex Hawke MP, has introduced additional flexibility to recognise the unique difficulties faced by some of our most distinguished applicants for citizenship.

“Australian citizenship is a rare privilege and it should not come easy. Those who apply must meet a range of character, values and language requirements. They must also have lived in Australia for a minimum period to be eligible,” Minister Hawke said.

“However, the unique work and travel demands on some of our most highly distinguished prospective Australians should not preclude them from making the cut. That’s why I have directed the Department of Home Affairs to apply greater flexibility in applying the residence requirement for eligible people,” he said.

“Exceptional people must not be prevented from becoming Australians because of the unique demands of the very work they do that makes them exceptional,” he said.

The Minister will extend the special residence concession to all distinguished talent visa holders and to athletes in the Australian Commonwealth Games team.

Under current arrangements applicants for citizenship must meet the general residence requirement which provides that they have lived in Australia on a valid visa for the past 4 years, and were absent for no more than 12 months in that time. They must also have been a permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen and absent from Australia for no more than 90 days during the 12 months before applying.

Currently, the special residence requirement may apply for a range of applicants who due to their work undertake significant international travel and where it is in the Australian national interest including Australian representative sportspeople, ships’ crew, senior businesspeople, research scientists, and distinguished artists. The special residence requirement provides that an applicant has held a valid visa for the last four years, living in Australia for at least 480 days during that time, and must have been a permanent resident

and in Australia for 120 days in the year immediately before applying. The special residence requirement will now also apply to past, present and future distinguished talent stream visa holders.

For more information visit: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/citizenship/become-a-citizen>

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