

To whom it may concern

First of all, I would like to introduce ourselves. Our names are Simone Koenig and Alexander Kurz. We come from Germany and have been in a de facto relationship for 14 years.

My sister, Melanie Williams has been living in Australia for 10 years. She is married to an Australian and they just had their first baby boy Jake.

We came to Australia more than two and a half years ago to embrace the Australian lifestyle and way of living. Through our travel and holidays in Australia in 2002 and 2004 we have learned to love and appreciate this country and what we believe it stands for.

Some of our friends from Germany have moved here previously and everyone has spoken very highly about Australia, its people and their attitude.

Australia, its natural beauties and landscapes and the motto "Everyone can get a fair go" has appealed to us in such a manner that we decided to try to become permanent residents of this country.

It wasn't easy to leave our loved ones behind. There were financial situations to overcome. As you know it is not cheap to gain all relevant skills, documents, certificates etc that are required if one decides to try to become a permanent resident.

To this point, we have spent an estimated \$26,000 on things that relate to our quest for permanent residency.

If you consider our age (30 and 34), that is a huge amount of money to save up. We worked hard back home to get this kind of money. And since we came to Australia, we have been working hard to make sure we never fall burden to the Australian society and being able to pay all our bills.

We believe we would make good Australians. Our German upbringing has taught us that nothing is free in life. You need to work hard if you want to achieve something. But if you are willing to work hard, you can achieve anything you set yourself as a goal.

To our great and bitter disgust, we had to learn that due to potential structural changes to the immigration legal system, our application for permanent residency (that we submitted on December 18th 2009), might be voided and not even be looked at by an Australian Immigration Officer.

We believe this is highly unfair and are devastated we might have to leave Australia without getting a chance to prove we can contribute in a positive manner to the essence of this country.

For two and a half years we have been doing everything that was asked from us. We paid our bills, rent and taxes and became actively involved within the community.

Alexander works with young children at a local school.

He has been playing soccer for Murdoch/ Melville Soccer Club for two years.

I have completed two Diploma courses at the local TAFE in order for my German qualifications to be recognized here and I currently work as a cook at a local restaurant. I participate in Yoga classes that are run in my area and we both love to get out of town on the weekends to explore the countryside surrounding Perth and meet some locals. We have German and Australian friends and enjoy a good old "barbie" any day of the week.

Overall, we have become Australians already. We just need a document that certifies this officially.

After all we have been through, the least we should be entitled to is a fair go to become Australians, and not become victims of an immigration system that is in need for an overhaul.

We have trusted Australia as much as to stand by its own laws.

We believe that if these changes take place, it would cause great damage to Australia's international reputation.

Bottom line, 2 ½ years ago "Australia" said to us:

"Come and live here, we need you. You have a skill that we can use. Just spend some more money here and get the relevant Australian qualifications. If you do this, there is a good chance you will succeed in becoming a permanent Australian resident".

Now Australia might say:

"Sorry mate, we have too many people trying to get in this beautiful country. We changed our mind. Bugger off to your home country".

You be the judge whether this is fair or unfair!!

Kind regards,

Simone Koenig