

Submission to the Australian Senate Inquiry: AusCheck Amendment (Global Entry Program) Bill 2025

Submitted by: The American Australian Association

Introduction

The American Australian Association (AAA), founded in 1948, is the premier organization dedicated to strengthening the bilateral relationship between Australia and the United States. Our work spans cultural, educational, and business exchanges, as well as policy engagement that fosters collaboration between our two nations.

We welcome the opportunity to submit this statement in support of the AusCheck Amendment (Global Entry Program) Bill 2025 currently before the Australian Parliament.

Strong Support for Australia's Inclusion in the Global Entry Program (GEP)

The Association strongly supports Australia's inclusion in the United States' Global Entry Program (GEP) and views the proposed legislative changes as a critical step toward achieving this goal.

With thousands of Australians traveling to the United States annually for business, tourism, education, and cultural exchange, expedited immigration and customs clearance for eligible Australian travelers will not only enhance convenience but also foster stronger bilateral ties.

Benefits of the Bill and Australia's Participation in the GEP

1. Strengthened Bilateral Relations

The proposed inclusion of Australian citizens in the GEP demonstrates the deep trust between the United States and Australia. Expedited processing will ease entry for Australian travelers and reflects a shared confidence in border security and people-to-people movement.

2. Enhanced Mobility for Australian Citizens

Australians currently lack access to GEP, putting them at a disadvantage compared to travelers from other GEP-approved countries. The phased inclusion of Australians in the program will reduce waiting times and improve travel experiences, particularly for frequent travelers engaged in business and cultural exchanges.

3. Alignment with International Standards

The Bill's background check and regulatory framework align with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) security and eligibility standards. These provisions will ensure Australia meets the high standards required for GEP partner nations.

4. Minimal Financial Impact

The cost-recovery provision ensures that participation in GEP will not impose an undue financial burden on the Australian Government. A user-pays model is reasonable and ensures sustainability while delivering tangible benefits to Australian citizens.

5. Increased Opportunities for Bilateral Engagement

By facilitating smoother travel for Australians, the GEP will enhance business opportunities, cultural exchange, and educational collaborations. This ease of travel will contribute to greater economic and diplomatic engagement, further enriching the Australia-U.S. partnership.

Key Considerations

While we strongly support the Bill, we encourage the Australian Government to ensure transparency and efficiency in implementing the program. Specifically:

- **Cost Clarity for Applicants:** The costs associated with background checks should be clearly communicated and remain affordable for Australians across all income brackets.
- **Privacy Protections:** The Bill outlines robust safeguards for personal data collected during background checks. We encourage continued oversight to ensure privacy standards are upheld, and that data transfers to U.S. authorities are limited strictly to eligibility determinations (e.g., "Eligible" or "Not Eligible").

Conclusion

The American Australian Association believes the AusCheck Amendment (Global Entry Program) Bill 2025 is a vital legislative step toward strengthening Australia's partnership with the United States.

The inclusion of Australian citizens in the GEP reflects deep trust and collaboration between our two nations. We urge the Australian Parliament to pass this Bill without

delay, ensuring that Australians can benefit from GEP membership while maintaining the integrity and security of the program.

The AAA remains committed to promoting the shared interests of our two nations and stands ready to assist in the program's implementation.

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