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21 JUN 2018 - 11:16AM

# Australian citizenship approvals have been dramatically reduced

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During the first eight months of this year, 54,419 citizenship applications were approved compared to 139,285 in the year 2016-17.

Language English



By Shamsher Kainth [ /yourlanguage/punjabi/author/shamsher-kainth ]

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The processing of citizenship applications has been painfully slow this year with the Department of Home Affairs approving 54,419 applications during the first eight months of 2017-18, compared to 139,285 last year, according to information released to the Federal Parliament on Monday.

During this financial year, a total of 141,236 citizenship applications were received as of February 28, the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs revealed.

The Department of Home Affairs last month told the Federal Parliament that over 200,000 people were awaiting the outcome of their citizenship applications as of April 30 this year with the average waiting period for processing applications ballooning up to 16 months.

The relatively low number of citizenship grants is attributed to the period of April- October 2017 when the Department held on to new applications after announcing the citizenship reforms that sought to increase the general residence requirement and introduce a standalone English language test. The Government is planning to bring back a reworked version of the Bill after its proposed law was defeated in the Senate.

Home Affairs officer Luke Mansfield told a Senate Estimates hearing last month that an increased number of applications coupled with tightened national security requirements had led to an increase in the processing time of citizenship applications.



### **Citizenship applicants facing uncertainty**

Atul Vidhata who runs an online forum – Fair Go for Australian Citizenship, says many migrants have been waiting much longer than sixteen months.

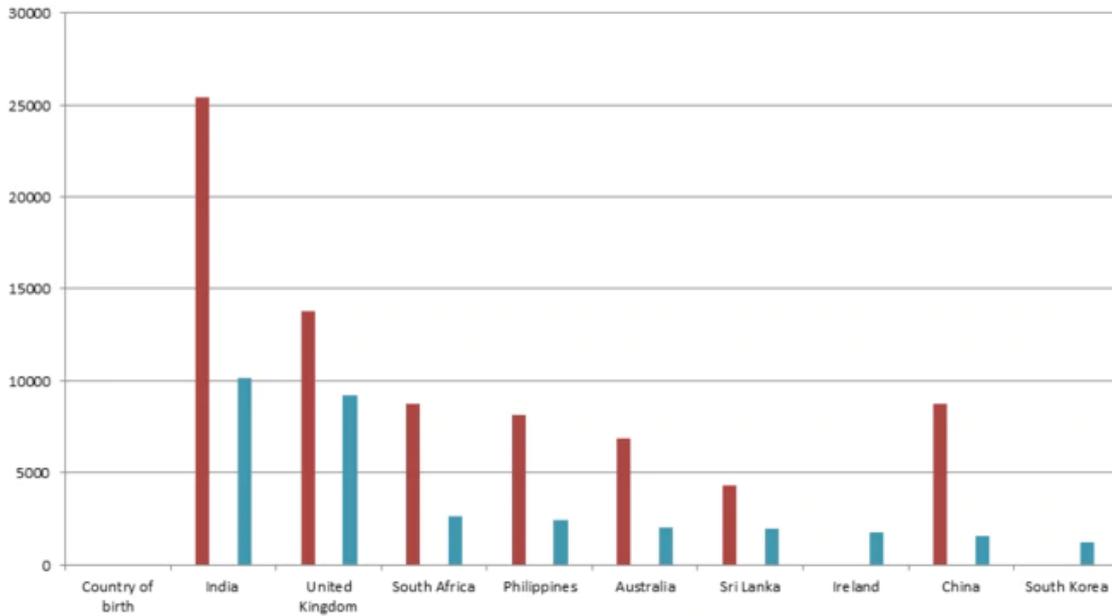
“When these people contact the department, they are told it’s not a service standard to process the applications within this timeframe,” he tells SBS Punjabi.

“There’s a lot of uncertainty due to a lack of clear communication. In our experience, some applications that were made in 2018 are being processed faster whereas applications made in 2017 are still held up.”

MP Julian Hill had questioned the Citizenship Minister Alan Tudge about the criteria applied for applications requiring ‘thorough analysis’ or ‘further assessment’.

“All applications for Australian citizenship are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the legislative criteria,” Mr Tudge responded.

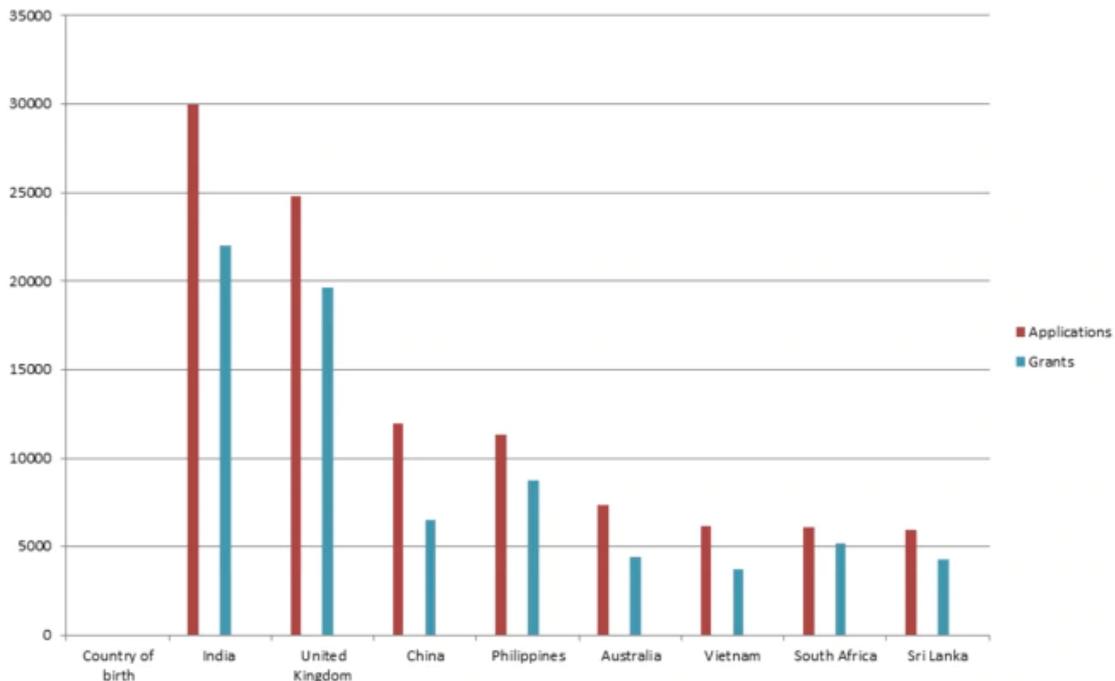
**2017-18  
To 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018**



**India overtakes the UK as top source of Australian citizenship**

Responding to questions by Victorian Labor MP Julian Hill, Mr Tudge revealed the country-wise break up of citizenship statistics.

**Year 2016-17**



India has been the top source of citizenship in Australia for the last five years overtaking the United Kingdom.

Since 2012-13, over 118,000 people born in India have pledged their allegiance to Australia by becoming Australian citizens. Indian migrants also top the list of country-wise visa recipients in Australia's annual immigration program.

As of February 28 this year, 10,168 Indian-born migrants were granted Australian citizenship with 25,408 Indian-born people applying during the same time. The 2016-17 figure stood at 22,006 citizenship grants to Indian migrants with 29,955 Indians applying for it.

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Queues for migration and citizenship get longer and longer

As of April 30 this year, there were over 200,000 citizenship applications being processed by the Department of Home Affairs, and perhaps a comparable number of permanent residency applications.

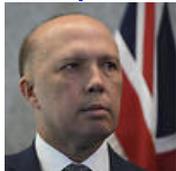
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Indian man refused Australian citizenship after four year wait

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection said Sagar Shah met all the requirements for Australian citizenship, except one.

[ </yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/04/13/immigration-tweak-likely-hit-indians?cid=inbody:australian-citizenship-approvals-have-been-dramatically-reduced> ]



Australian visa tweak likely to hit Indian migrants the hardest

Migration agents are predicting the government's decision to merge a new visa for New Zealanders with the Skilled Independent (subclass 189) program will negatively impact Indian migrants.

[ </yourlanguage/punjabi/en/article/2018/03/05/australia-introduce-new-visa-boost-economy-jobs?cid=inbody:australian-citizenship-approvals-have-been-dramatically-reduced> ]



Australia to introduce new visa to boost economy, jobs

The Australian Government says it will introduce a new visa for people willing to establish businesses in the country. The visa will not require any mandatory funding outlay and an applicant only needs to demonstrate "vocational English".

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