

Submission – Productivity Commission

My name is Daniel. I am a permanent resident. I have lived in Aotearoa New Zealand since I was 10 years old. I have voted in three elections. I have been admitted to the roll of barristers and solicitors of the High Court of New Zealand. I have studied Te Reo at university, and continue learning in my new work. I am a New Zealander.

Converting one's permanent residence to citizenship is often impossible for those who spend any significant period out of the country, whether to care for a sick relative, pursue an exchange or short-term job opportunity, or any other legitimate reason that reflects the dual nature of our backgrounds.

It would be highly cruel to deny me the right to return to New Zealand if I moved overseas to study and work. I would be cut off from my family, friends, and country. I would be prevented safe refuge if my new home became dangerous. It would be more difficult for me to bring my skills and knowledge of the rest of the world back to New Zealand. It would devastate New Zealand's relationship with its permanent resident diaspora.

I am disappointed the Productivity Commission report frames New Zealand's difficulties "absorbing" immigrants as a failure of immigration – it has been a failure of successive governments to plan for a growing and prosperous New Zealand. I am not a burden on New Zealand. I will not be a burden on New Zealand, regardless of how long I choose to live overseas. I have a permanent relationship with this country, one on which my family has built their lives. It would be an extraordinary breach of that compact to exclude those who move abroad, who are our ambassadors and whose families overseas will be New Zealand's enduring friends.