



The Royal Commonwealth Society welcomes the Australian High Commissioner's UK-Australia freer movement comments

The Australian High Commissioner, Alexander Downer's remarks in a [Sky News interview](#) yesterday are an encouraging public intervention in the on going visa discussions between the UK and Australia.

Mr Downer said that; "Over time we would like to continue to talk to the British Government about arrangements we could make to liberalise movement between Australia and the UK. If not have completely free movement – probably not completely unregulated – but to have freer movement of people."

His comments support calls made by campaigners and the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) after it [commissioned polling](#) of Australians and Britons on the issue of free movement between the two countries.

Tim Hewish, Director of Policy and Research at the RCS said: "We very much welcome the High Commissioner's comments. Freer movement to live and work between the UK and Australia has considerably strong support amongst the Australian public. Our polling showed 70% of Australians favoured this policy, with only one in ten opposed. Both nations share a deep Commonwealth bond of language, law and kinship along with economic compatibility. Having greater movement rights would mean that the thousands of skilled Australians in the UK would not have to worry about being deported. We now need to see more supporters from across politics, business, public services and the arts come forward and back this proposal."

Although current attention is focused on the upcoming EU referendum in the UK, regardless of its outcome, the modern Commonwealth network should be recognised as an asset and an important factor in the UK's future policy decisions.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Royal Commonwealth Society, founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world.



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

OmniPoll in Australia questioned 1,247 Australians between 28 January and 2 February on behalf of the Society. It found that Australians aged 25-34 signalled the least opposition at 4%, while those aged 35-64 are the least supportive with 64%; although this is accounted for by an average 27% selecting an 'unsure' response. Australian men and women are show equal support at 70%. Geographically, Queensland and WA are most supportive with 72%. Tasmania signalled the least support with 59% followed by South Australia & NT with 63%. These fluctuations are accounted for by the differing 'unsure' responses with overall opposition fluctuating marginally between 6-11%. [Download](#) the full press release.

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