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# Australian minister orders changes for New Zealanders facing deportation

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Australia's prime minister Anthony Albanese Photo: AFP

P Q Australia's immigration minister has ordered his department to soften its stance on deporting New Zealanders convicted of serious crimes, saying how long they have lived in Australia should now be made a top consideration.

Australia has deported hundreds of New Zealanders using laws made almost a decade ago that allowed long-term residents to be deported on character grounds, as well as those who had been sentenced to a prison term of at least 12 months.

The most common reasons for visa cancellations of any nationality were drug offences, child sex offences and domestic violence offences.

5th spokesperson for Immigration Minister Andrew Giles said the government had the department to take a "common sense" approach.

~~"Under these changes the Department of Home Affairs must now consider the length of time someone has lived in the Australian community as one of the primary considerations when determining whether to cancel someone's visa," the spokesperson said.~~

"Where individuals pose a risk to the community, the Australian government will continue to cancel their visas and remove them."

Successive New Zealand governments have complained that the people deported to New Zealand had no meaningful links to the country or had spent most of their life in Australia.

New Zealand's recently departed prime minister Jacinda Ardern in 2019 labelled the policy "corrosive" (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/394715/jacinda-ardern-to-focus-on-australia-deportations-in-talks-with-scott-morrison>) to the country's relationship with Australia during a joint press conference with then-prime minister Scott Morrison.

Ardern raised the issue again with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese following his election win, where he said Australia would not change its core position on deportations, but that his government would take New Zealand's concerns into consideration "as friends" (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/on-the-inside/470640/stars-align-as-hollow-words-for-new-zealanders-in-australia-shift-to-concrete-action>).

New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said the decision was a welcome "first step".

"The acknowledgement on the Australian side that actually some of the people that we are talking about have had a long history in Australia - some of them have been there since they were very young children - and sending them to New Zealand when they have no connections here other than a very historic one isn't really a fair or just outcome," Mr Hipkins said.

"I think the acknowledgement of that by the Australians is very, very welcome.

Hipkins said further work with Australia around visa cancellations would continue, as well as "the general treatment of New Zealanders living in Australia".

- **ABC**

- [Prime Minister Chris Hipkins to meet Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese in Canberra \(/news/political/483390/prime-minister-chris-hipkins-to-meet-australian-counterpart-anthony-albanese-in-canberra\)](#)
- [Stars align as hollow words for New Zealanders in Australia shift to concrete action \(/news/on-the-inside/470640/stars-align-as-hollow-words-for-new-zealanders-in-australia-shift-to-concrete-action\)](#)