

# ANZAC DAY INSPIRES FREE TRAVEL INITIATIVE BETWEEN AUS AND NZ



Australians and New Zealanders might soon not need passports to travel to each other's countries, as the local tourist industry backed an informal initiative proposed by the New Zealand Internal Affairs Minister, who suggested a strengthening of the relationship between the neighboring countries to Aussie PM Tony Abbott, in celebration of the Anzac Day's centenary.

The idea, as proposed by the Kiwi Minister is **to eliminate the need for citizens of both countries to go through passport checks when crossing the border, as in Europe's Schengen Area.**

Unsurprisingly, the Tourism Industry Association NZ was quick to welcome this idea, as they see the elimination of borders as a way to stimulate travel and tourism between the two countries, and in particular, as an opportunity for New Zealand to become a prime holiday destination for Aussies, creating a concept of 'home away from home' in the neighboring country.

Based on the fact that Aussies account for a great portion of New Zealand's visitors (1.27 million arrivals in the last year) and vice-versa, it does seem like a natural move to remove barriers, especially seeing as, according to the Association's chief executive, Chris Roberts, those barriers are one of the last few obstacles impeding the two countries and their respective peoples from having a much closer, neighborly relationship.

Agreements like the one proposed are quite common in other parts of the world, as 'friendly' countries agree to open their borders to their neighbors, boosting not only diplomatic relations and tourism but also business. **It is, in fact, somewhat surprising that two countries as closely linked as Australia and New Zealand, who even share a national remembrance day like Anzac, didn't have such a protocol up to this point.**

It is to be expected, however, that should the initiative come to fruition, then both countries should take great benefit from their shared borders, even beyond the strengthening of their friendship and increased tourist activity.

Date: 2015-04-27

Article link:

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