

Community Relations Commission

For a multicultural NSW

Your Ref: Invitation dated 8 July 2009
Our Ref: MWW29Jul
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Mr Peter Hallahan
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
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Dear Mr Hallahan

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission in relation to the *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Test Review and Other Measures) Bill 2009*.

It is noted that the bill seeks to amend the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* to implement the recommendations of the Australian Citizenship Test Review Committee. In particular, the bill proposes amendments in relation to applicants with an incapacity resulting from torture or trauma outside Australia, to streamlining the application and testing process, and to strengthen the eligibility requirements for citizenship by conferral for applicants under 18.

We restate the Commission's position on a broad concept of citizenship as a part of the 'social glue' and a focal point for an overlapping consensus of deeply held values that underpins multicultural Australia. The proposed amendments support these sentiments by strengthening and streamlining the citizenship application and testing process. They also make the process more inclusive and welcoming for applicants with a physical or mental incapacity that is a result of torture or trauma outside Australia.

The Commission supports the *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Test Review and Other Measures) Bill 2009* and appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stepan Kerkyasharian".

Stepan Kerkyasharian AM
Chairperson

30 JUL 2009

