

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/060) - Citizenship tests and awaiting Ceremonies - Programme 2.1: Citizenship

Senator Bilyk, Catryna (L&CA 94) asked:

Ms Dacey: To 31 December last year, conferral applications were 92,857, descent applications were 10,494, evidence applications were 19,973, resumption applications were 125 and renunciation applications were 119.

Senator BILYK: Are you able to tell me how many of those applicants have successfully sat the citizenship test yet have not attended a ceremony and made the pledge of commitment?

Ms Dacey: I can give you the number of tests and the number of clients who have sat the test, but I am not sure I could link it up to the gap between those numbers and those attending ceremonies.

Mr Williams: We do have figures on the number of people who are currently waiting for a ceremony. That would give you a rough idea. The number of tests administered in the year to 31 December was 63,785. That represented 52,379 applicants, because some people sat the test a couple of times. And the number of people waiting to attend a ceremony—this is a snapshot; I do not quite have the date for it—is, as at the end of December 2015, I think 21,194.

Senator BILYK: Even though Australia Day was in January?

Mr Williams: That is right. So, I think these figures—and I will confirm this on notice—are probably from the end of December. There were some 16,000 new Australian citizenship conferrals on Australia Day and in ceremonies around—16,200 or so. A lot of those would have been—

Senator BILYK: That leaves a gap of about 5,000 that have passed the test—

Mr Williams: Yes, there is always a bit of a gap.

Senator BILYK: but not yet attended a ceremony or taken the pledge.

Mr Williams: That is right, but I will just confirm that. If I have that wrong we will let you know on notice.

Senator BILYK: Thanks. And while you are doing that, maybe you could tell me, for the same question, how many sat the test but had not yet attended a ceremony or made the pledge for 30 June 2013, for 30 June 2014 and for 30 June 2015?

Mr Williams: I can tell you how many people sat the test in the financial year 2012-13.

Senator BILYK: I really want to know how many sat the test but had not yet attended a ceremony or made the pledge, because they have been getting concerns to us that there is a delay in being able to take the pledge—which of course you have to do to become an Australian citizen.

Mr Williams: That is right. I do not have the number of people waiting for a ceremony on that date that you nominated. We have only a snapshot for that most recent date in time.

Senator BILYK: Okay, but if you could take that on notice—

Mr Williams: Will do—for the—

Senator BILYK: For 30 June 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Mr Williams: For each of those years; righto.

Senator BILYK: And perhaps you could provide that information by country of birth.
Mr Williams: Will do.

Answer

Applicants will only be invited to attend a citizenship ceremony once all assessment criteria have been satisfied, including the citizenship test where applicable and their application has been approved. There were at least 170 different nationalities represented in the groups eligible to attend a ceremony as at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015.

A breakdown of the top 25 nationalities of people eligible to attend a ceremony, as at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015 is provided at Table 1 below. This information is not available by country of birth, nor for people eligible to attend a ceremony as at 30 June 2013 because this level of information is not recorded on departmental systems for that period.

Table 1. People whose conferral applications were approved and who were eligible to attend a ceremony, by top 25 nationalities, as at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015.

Number of people eligible to attend a ceremony, by top 25 nationalities (as at 30 June 2014)		Number of people eligible to attend a ceremony, by top 25 nationalities (as at 30 June 2015)	
India	6,920	India	9,027
United Kingdom	6,221	United Kingdom	7,530
China	2,705	China	3,040
Philippines	2,492	Philippines	2,693
South Africa	1,917	South Africa	2,037
New Zealand	1,264	New Zealand	1,587
Sri Lanka	970	Vietnam	1,410
Vietnam	940	Sri Lanka	1,356
Ireland	827	Ireland	1,308
Afghanistan	777	Nepal	1,170
Bangladesh	771	Pakistan	1,027
Myanmar	776	Malaysia	915
Malaysia	699	Korea, Republic Of	883
Korea, Republic Of	655	Iran	799
Iraq	631	Bangladesh	774
Pakistan	573	United States Of America	770
Nepal	564	Thailand	649
Iran	530	Afghanistan	597
United States Of America	515	Iraq	592
Thailand	457	Myanmar	530
Zimbabwe	363	Germany	446
Canada	346	Fiji	444
Indonesia	336	Canada	440
Fiji	326	Brazil	421
Germany	324	France	407
Other	7,348	Other	9,199
Total	40,247	Total	50,051