

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 22 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(BE17/281) - Citizenship test – current IELTS equivalent - Programme 2.1:
Citizenship**

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA) written:

The citizenship test is currently in English. What level of English is required to do the test? What IELTS equivalent?

Why was IELTS Level 6.0 decided?

What IELTS level (reading, writing, speaking, listening) are current Australian citizens? Is that year 10 level? Year 12 level? What's the breakdown?

Answer:

A basic knowledge of the English language is required to sit the current citizenship test. 'Basic' English is not defined in the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*.

The Government has decided to introduce a requirement for citizenship applicants to have competent English language through listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Applicants in the skilled migration programme already have to demonstrate competent English at IELTS of 6 or equivalent.

English language is essential for economic participation and social cohesion. After an aspiring citizen has spent four years in Australia as a permanent resident, it is anticipated that they would have had sufficient time to reach a competent level of English.

The Department currently accepts English language test scores from the following test providers:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
- Occupational English Test (OET)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic
- Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)

Under the IELTS, a score band of 6 equates to competent English. As with permanent skilled visa requirements, the General Training IELTS test is accepted.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection does not hold information on the English language proficiency of current Australian citizens.