

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 22 May 2017**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(BE17/295) - Citizenship test - advantage for native English speakers - Programme 2.1: Citizenship**

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA) written:

Would the citizenship changes in regard to English language give an advantage to people who are from English speaking countries over every other migrant?

*Answer:*

Australia's Migration Programme is non-discriminatory and visas are granted to applicants who meet requirements set out in the *Migration Act 1958* and *Migration Regulations 1994*. Permanent visa holders can apply for citizenship by conferral provided they meet the criteria in the *Citizenship Act 2007* and *Citizenship Regulation 2016*.

It is expected that applicants from English speaking countries who are competent in the English language will meet the English language requirement. As is currently the case for skilled migration assessments by the Department, citizens of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Canada, the United States of America or New Zealand who hold a valid passport will be exempted from English language testing.

English language test exemptions for age and disability will also apply to applicants over 60 years of age, or under 16 years of age at the time of application; and to those with an enduring or permanent mental or physical incapacity. Applicants who have undertaken specified English language studies at a recognised Australian education institution will also be exempted.

