

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

#### IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

#### (SE16/072) - Citizenship Applications - Programme 2.1: Citizenship

Senator McKim, Nick (L&CA) written:

1. In regard to refugees living in Australia who are entitled to Australian citizenship and have applied. I understand that these applications are not being processed and some people have been waiting for nearly 2 years.

- How many former refugees who have been eligible to apply for Aus citizenship have done so in the past 3 years?
- Have many have been granted Aus citizenship?
- How many outstanding applications does the Department have from Hazara refugees who are eligible for citizenship?
- Why is the Department unable to process these applications in a timely manner?

2. Why are applicants being asked to provide documents from governments of countries from which they have fled, particularly when they have relatives who may be at risk who are still living there?

3. What is the expected timeframe for resolution of these outstanding citizenship applications?

*Answer:*

1. Regardless of how and when they arrive in Australia, all applicants for Australian citizenship must meet the legislative criteria of the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*. There is no separate government policy regarding citizenship applications by humanitarian visa holders. The number of humanitarian entrants who have applied for Australian citizenship in the last three years (2013–14 to 2015–16) is 45,702.

The number of humanitarian entrants who have acquired citizenship in the last three years (2013–14 to 2015–16) is 32,415.

Information regarding the ethnicity of citizenship applicants is not reportable from Departmental systems.

2. Subsection 24(3) of the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* provides that a person must not be approved to become an Australian citizen unless the decision maker is satisfied of the person's identity.

Where an applicant has supplied insufficient information in support of their identity, the Department may write to the applicant to request any further documents that the applicant may have to provide further evidence of their identity.

The Department recognises that some applicants are unable to provide the necessary evidence to verify their identity for the purposes of the *Australian Citizenship*

*Act 2007*. In situations where the applicant is unable to supply further documentation, they are asked to inform the Department, and to explain any extenuating circumstances, which are considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Each application must be assessed on its own merits, the length and time is dependent on the complexity of the case, and the volume of applications received.