

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 9 FEBRUARY 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(62) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services

Senator Humphries (L&C 117) asked:

Since Senator Humphries' correspondence, have there been any citizenship ceremonies held in Canberra other than the one on Australia Day? Was there a ceremony held on 5 February 2010 in Canberra? If so, provide details.

Answer:

Since Senator Humphries' correspondence on 11 September 2009, there have been six citizenship ceremonies in Canberra hosted by the ACT Legislative Assembly, other than the one on Australia Day. In addition, four departmental ceremonies were held on 23 November 2009.

On 23 September 2009 the Department contacted the Office of Multicultural Affairs, who provides administrative support for citizenship ceremonies conducted by the ACT Legislative Assembly, and reminded staff of their obligation to invite Members of Parliament and Senators to every ceremony. Training was subsequently provided in October 2009 for staff from the Office of Multicultural Affairs on the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code and in particular the requirement to invite parliamentarians to each ceremony.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs advised the Department that they had put in place procedures to ensure parliamentarians were invited to future ceremonies.

The ACT Legislative Assembly held a ceremony on 5 February 2010 to which Senator Humphries did not receive an invitation.

The Department has contacted the Office of Multicultural Affairs seeking advice on the process they had followed. The Director of the Office of Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs advised DIAC on 12 February 2010 that recent staff changes had resulted in an administrative oversight affecting the invitation list for the ceremony on 5 February 2010. He further advised that this issue has since been rectified and that all parliamentarians will receive a letter of invitation for each ceremony held in the future as well as a list of all ceremonies scheduled to be held by the ACT Legislative Assembly in 2010.

Subsequent to the Estimates hearing on 9 February 2010 Senator Chris Evans wrote to Senator Humphries outlining action taken in relation to this matter.