

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 11 February 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE13/0178) PROGRAM – OMARA

Senator Cash (Written) asked:

How did the Authority arrive at the score of 6.5 for all IELTS tests as a suitable standard for Registered Migration Agents whose first language is not English?

Answer:

The English language standard applies regardless of whether an agent's first language is English. The *2007-08 Review of Statutory Regulation of the Migration Advice Profession* recommended that the required level of English language proficiency be increased from IELTS level 6 to 7 for both initial and repeat registration applicants. This recommendation was supported by the government.

In the IELTS system a test score of 6 indicates a **competent** user, while a score of 7 indicates a **good** user. It was the view of the Authority that if an applicant received a score on any of the four test components (reading, writing, speaking and listening) of less than 6.5 then the overall English language requirement may be compromised.