

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 30 October 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(242) Output 2.3: Australian Citizenship

Senator Hurley (L&CA 131) asked:

In relation to citizenship tests, have the Netherlands or any other countries done an evaluation?

Answer:

The UK introduced the Life in the UK citizenship test on 1 November 2005. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate within the Home Office has advised that it intends to conduct studies into the effectiveness of the citizenship test. The UK Government has announced that with effect from 2 April 2007, testing knowledge of English and of the UK will be extended to people seeking permanent residence in the UK. This will be the first phase in the implementation of its policies which reflect research which shows that a common language is a critical factor in achieving successful integration.

Canada advises that a formal evaluation of their citizenship test has not been conducted since changing the testing format in 1997.

The Netherlands has advised that they have conducted an evaluation into their naturalisation test, which will soon be replaced by their new integration exam applying to all newcomers and not only those seeking Dutch citizenship.

The Office of Citizenship, within US Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, has advised that it is conducting consultations with a range of stakeholders on the US citizenship test. Studies have also been commissioned and are currently being undertaken. These will inform a planned revision of the US citizenship test, scheduled to be implemented in 2008.