

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 On 13 June 2007, the Senate referred the provisions of the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill 2007 (Bill) to the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, for inquiry and report by 31 July 2007.

1.2 The Bill proposes to amend the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* (the Act) to provide for the testing of prospective applicants for Australian citizenship by conferral. Specifically, the Bill will require applicants for Australian citizenship by conferral under the general eligibility provisions (subsection 21(2) of the Act) to have successfully completed a citizenship test, before making an application, in order to be eligible to become Australian citizens.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 The committee advertised the inquiry in *The Australian* newspaper on 27 June 2007 and 11 July 2007, and invited submissions by 6 July 2007. Details of the inquiry, the Bill, and associated documents were placed on the committee's website. The committee also wrote to over 100 organisations and individuals seeking their input.

1.4 The committee received 59 submissions which are listed at Appendix 1. Submissions were placed on the committee's website for ease of access by the public.

1.5 The committee held public hearings in Canberra on 16 July 2007 and in Sydney on 17 July 2007. A list of witnesses who appeared at the hearing is at Appendix 2 and copies of the Hansard transcript are available through the Internet at <http://aph.gov.au/hansard>.

Acknowledgement

1.6 The committee thanks those organisations and individuals who made submissions and gave evidence at the public hearing.

Note on references

1.7 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the committee, not to a bound volume. References to the committee Hansard are to the proof Hansard: page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.

