

Inquiry into the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and Other Measures) Bill 2017

Possible questions for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection arising from its Submission

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23/08/17

- A. In general terms, what evidence base can the Department point to as the basis for the amendments to the existing requirements for citizenship by application?
- B. The following questions build on the research in the article by Sara Goodman, 'Integration Requirements for Integration's Sake? Identifying, Categorising and Comparing Civic Integration Policies' (2010) 36 *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 753 – 772 which is the main academic source relied on by the Department in its submission.
 - a. The Department points to a trend in other countries of adding new eligibility requirements for citizenship. Has the Department made any inquiries, or is it aware of research, on the success of the implementation of these new eligibility criteria in countries such as the Netherlands, the UK and France, in terms of improvements to integration or social cohesion, or in terms of increased security outcomes?
 - b. Among countries with liberal eligibility requirements similar to Australia (that is, where migrants can gain citizenship after a period of residence) is the Department aware of research that compares countries with extra integration requirements (such as the Netherlands, the UK and France) and countries with less (or no) integration requirements (such as Portugal, Finland, Ireland, Belgium and Sweden).
- C. The Department devotes a whole chapter (Chapter 3) of its submission to outlining the results of the National Consultation on Citizenship, and refers to it in later chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) as a key basis for the case for reform.
 - a. In general terms, what weight does the Department place on the results of the National Consultation?
 - b. Is the Department satisfied that the methodology underpinning the on-line survey in the Consultation is sufficiently rigorous for the findings in the survey to be sound?
 - c. In particular, is it concerned that the results might be affected by the framing of the discussion preceding the survey link (which makes strong reference to the threat of home-grown terrorism): See:
<https://www.border.gov.au/about/reports-publications/discussion-papers-submissions/australian-citizenship-your-right-your-responsibility>

- d. The strongest findings in the Report of the National Consultation (p12 and 13 of the report) related to the need to improve civic education and promote Australian values, and the importance of citizenship for *all* Australians. Does the Department have a role in implementing these recommendations?

D. At point 54 of its submission, the Department references the Migration Policy Institute, *In Search of Common Values amid Large-Scale Immigrant Integration Pressures* (<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/search-common-values-amid-large-scale-immigrant-integration-pressures>) to suggest ‘more and more countries are imposing integration requirements at an early stage in migration.’ Does the Department agree with the key lessons that the Report says can be learned from the study, namely:

- “Programs that communicate and instil shared values are often narrowly targeted to newcomers, particularly refugees and asylum seekers; expanding them to include second-generation and temporary immigrants and the native born would help strengthen a common understanding of values and create room for dialogue between groups.”
- “While policies that restrict minority practices may be politically popular, such measures run the risk of further alienating marginalized communities and should be used sparingly.”