

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

Question No. 140

Senator Nettle asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:

- a) I note that the proposed Australian Citizenship Bill gives ASIO a veto over decisions to grant citizenship. Was that new power requested by ASIO? If yes when was that request made?
- b) What is the reason for this power?
- c) Has citizenship ever been granted in the past to someone on whom ASIO has made an adverse or qualified security finding?
- d) Does ASIO currently vet all applications for citizenship?
- e) Is it anticipated that you will do so in the future?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

- a) Under the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*, which is expected to come into effect on 1 July 2007, the Minister must not approve a person becoming an Australian citizen at a time when an adverse or qualified security assessment is in force under the *Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979*. Any such assessment is able to be appealed to the Security Appeals Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
- b) The provisions are intended to contribute to enhancing the protection of the Australian community.
- c) This is a matter for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- d)–e). For reasons of national security, it would not be appropriate to discuss the extent or detail of arrangements for security checking of citizenship applications.