

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 FEBRUARY 2008

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(34) Output 2.3: Australian Citizenship

Senator Ellison (L&CA 111) asked:

I ask you about the release of statistics on 2 January when there was an article which said that 20 per cent of the people who sat the test had failed. It was subsequently pointed out in a release by me that what that was measuring was the number of tests not the number of people, and that was subsequently corrected. Can the department shed any light on how that statistic was released? How did it get into the ether—the fact that on 2 January statistics appeared in media across Australia suggesting that 20 per cent of people who sat the test had failed? In fact today we have heard that it is 92.3 per cent. How did that come about and was that subsequently corrected so that there was a clarification made between the number of tests that were sat and the number of people who passed, because some people sat the test more than once? Was there any clarification delivered on that?

Answer:

The Minister issued a press release on 2 January 2008 (attached) which included preliminary figures on how many tests had been completed, and how many people had sat those tests, between 1 October and 31 December 2007. The release also stated that around 90 per cent of people had passed the test on their first or subsequent attempt.

Drawing on the data in the release, it appears some media outlets incorrectly interpreted the figures.

The Minister issued a further press release on 29 January 2008 (attached) which accompanied the public release of a detailed report (attached) on test outcomes for the period 1 October to 31 December 2007. This report stated that, as at 31 December 2007, 92.9 per cent of people who had sat the test had passed it on their first or subsequent attempt.