

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(345) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services

Senator Barnett (L&CA 122) asked:

Provide the letter that the Minister sent to councils following the update of the (citizenship ceremonies) code in 2008.

Answer:

Following the 2008 update of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code, the then Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, wrote to all local government councils on 23 July 2008.

A copy of the letter is attached.



Senator Chris Evans

Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

«Organisation»
«PostalAddressLineOne»
«Suburb» «State» «PostCode»

Dear

Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code

Australian citizenship ceremonies are conducted in accordance with the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code (the Code). The Code provides guidance for organisations conducting ceremonies and sets out the legal and other requirements, as well as the roles and responsibilities of organisers and participants.

The Government values the significant contribution local government councils have made to Australian citizenship through the conduct of citizenship ceremonies and in welcoming new citizens as formal members of the Australian community.

In order to assist local government in their role of conferring citizenship, I have recently approved an update of the Code to bring it in line with the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* which was introduced on 1 July 2007. The Code has also been simplified and restructured with the aim of making it a more useful tool for organisations conducting citizenship ceremonies.

I am pleased to enclose copies of the updated Code which is also available on my Department's website at
<http://www.citizenship.gov.au/resources/ceremonies/code/index.htm>.

Although there are no changes to the legal and policy requirements for conducting citizenship ceremonies, the updated Code provides further clarification on some issues in response to past welcome feedback from local government councils.

The Government would in particular like to draw your attention to the following chapters:

- chapter 7 which sets out the policy concerning inviting government representatives to citizenship ceremonies;

- chapter 9 which sets out the three legal requirements for conducting a citizenship ceremony. This chapter also sets out the policy concerning the use of holy books. Candidates should be informed in their invitation letters that, should they wish to use a holy book or scripture to make the pledge, they should bring it to their citizenship ceremony.
- chapter 10 which sets out the policy concerning reading the Minister's message and speeches by official guests; and
- chapter 12 which sets out the policy concerning the need for the pledge verification list to be signed and returned promptly. This chapter also sets out the policy concerning disclosing names and addresses of new citizens.

The Government thanks you for your continued support of Australian citizenship.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Evans', written in a cursive style.

CHRIS EVANS

23 July 2008