

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(346) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services

Senator Barnett (L&CA 122) asked:

Provide a copy of any other correspondence to councils which says what they should do pursuant to the (Australian citizenship ceremonies) code since 2008.

Answer:

Copies of correspondence sent by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship to all councils since 2008 advising what they should do pursuant to the code are attached.

The Department routinely liaises with councils on matters relating to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code, for example the Department has conducted regular face to face information sessions with councils in relation to the Code. Departmental staff in the State and Territory offices also liaise regularly with individual councils (including by email, telephone and face to face) on the implementation of the Code as required.



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.

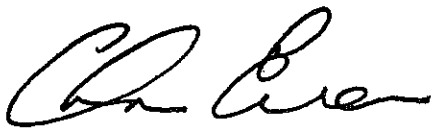
The Government would in particular like to draw your attention to the following chapters:

- 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



Senator Chris Evans
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Immigration and Citizenship

Councillor Paul Bell AM
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

Dear Councillor Bell

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

Copies of the updated Code are being sent to all local government councils.

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.

I would welcome feedback from your Association on the updated Code. Departmental staff would also be pleased to clarify any aspects of the Code direct with you if this is necessary. Please contact Ms Ludmila Witer, Director Citizenship Information and Promotions Section on 02 6264 2940 or at ludmila.witer@immi.gov.au or at the following address:

Director
Citizenship Information and Promotions Section
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
P.O. Box 25
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

Thank you for your continued support of Australian citizenship.

Yours sincerely



CHRIS EVANS

20.07.08