

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 29 MAY 2008

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(69) Output 2.3: Australian Citizenship

Senator Barnett (L&CA 39) asked:

Provide a copy of the citizenship task force's program of activities.

Answer:

The Citizenship Test Review Committee has undertaken a number of activities since they commenced work on the test review including extensive nation wide public consultations, small group discussions and meetings with a number of stakeholders and English language testing experts. The Committee has met regularly to discuss issues relevant to the review. In addition to the key events outlined below, the Committee members have held a number of other meetings with key stakeholders to discuss issues in relation to the review.

Week 1 (28 April – 2 May)

- Invitations to lodge a submission on the test were sent out to approximately 800 organisations Australia wide, including migrant/refugee bodies, business bodies, federations and councils dealing with multicultural issues, local government, the non-for-profit sector, education/academic bodies, religious and sporting bodies.
- Members of Cabinet, MPs and Senators were also informed of the review and were invited to advise their constituents and encourage them to lodge a submission.

Week 2 (5 May – 9 May)

- Visit to the Centrelink office in Coffs Harbour to observe the regional administration of the test.
- Teleconference meeting with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Regional Director in the UK to discuss the administration of the Australian citizenship test offshore as well as testing arrangements in the UK.

Week 3 (12 May – 16 May)

- Community consultations in Adelaide and Melbourne.
- Meeting with an African women's group to discuss specific community issues regarding the test.

Week 4 (19 May – 23 May)

- Community consultations in Perth and Wagga Wagga and a site visit to Kalgoorlie.
- Meeting with an African women's group to discuss specific community issues regarding the test.
- Two meetings (including one teleconference) with English language testing and teaching experts.

Week 5 (26 May – 30 May)

- Community consultations in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Sydney and Parramatta and a site visit to the Parramatta Testing Centre.
- Teleconference with reading assessment and English language testing expert.

Week 6 (2 June – 6 June)

- Community consultations in Hobart.
- Full day workshop to discuss the outcomes of all activities undertaken in May, and to plan their report with recommendations to be presented to the Minister by mid year.

Since 2 June, the Review Committee has met with several other organisations such as the Country Women's Association of NSW, the Mid North Coast Regional Development Board, the Riverina Regional Development Board and Surf Life Saving Australia.