

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 23-24 MAY 2011**

#### **IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO**

#### **(BE11/0780) Program 6.1: Multicultural and Citizenship Services**

Senator Cash asked:

The Citizenship Wizard Website expects visits to remain static at 80,000 visits per annum. Does that mean the Department expects the number of people applying to become citizens to remain static despite increases in the number of arrivals to Australia?

*Answer:*

The Citizenship Wizard is not intended to be used to estimate the number of applications for citizenship, but rather provides an indication of the level of interest in citizenship in the community. The Citizenship Wizard on the Citizenship Website is one of a number of channels through which people may seek information about applying for citizenship. The Citizenship Wizard suggests an application type that suits the enquirer based on information they enter.

It is not expected that people would repeatedly access this site prior to applying for Australian citizenship nor is it expected that every single applicant would access it.

The reason we retained the estimated number of visits to the Citizenship Wizard at 80,000 per annum, (a conservative estimate) was due to the expected decrease in applications due to the cessation of the transitional residence requirements at the end of June 2010.

Under these changes, people who were permanent residents before 1 July 2007 needed to have been living in Australia for two years as a permanent resident in the five years immediately before applying on or before 30 June 2010. From 1 July 2010, all applicants need to have four years lawful residence in Australia immediately prior to making an application for Australian citizenship including at least 12 months as a permanent resident immediately prior to application.

We therefore anticipate the number of applications for Australian citizenship to increase in 2011-12 as more people become eligible.