

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SENATE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INQUIRY HEARING INTO THE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT (CITIZENSHIP TESTING) BILL 2007: 16 July 2007

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Question (1 Hansard)

Senator Barnett asked:

Could the department provide a list of fees in relation to the citizenship test?

Answer:

There will be no fee payable at the time the citizenship test is taken.

The citizenship application fee payable by applicants, under the general eligibility provisions, who have been required to sit the citizenship test will be \$240. This fee will be the same regardless of whether the applicant for citizenship sat the test once, or several times, before he/she passed.

The fee for an application for citizenship by people applying under other situations who are not required to have sat a test will remain at \$120.

Certain holders of pensioner concession cards or health care concession cards who have been required to sit the citizenship test will be entitled to pay a concessionary fee of \$40.

No fee will be payable by British and Maltese former child migrants under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme, or by Australian Defence Force personnel, who have been required to sit the citizenship test.

Full details of all citizenship fees are provided in the attached draft fee form 1298i.

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Question (2 Hansard)

Senator Crossin asked:

Did you specify at all in your tender for the development of the test questions that there had to be a demonstration of either educational expertise, TESOL expertise or such like?

Answer:

In the department's request for quotation (RFQ) for the provision of test questions and answers to evaluate client understanding of Australian citizenship and English language ability we requested, among other things, that:

- The question bank must measure a test subject's understanding of Australian life and citizenship, whilst acting as a test of English language skills; and
- The tenderer have a proven record of professional expertise in the formulation of assessment processes through to the evaluation of learning.

The company selected following this RFQ process was the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). ACER has extensive experience in test development including a strong background in education and specialisation in second language assessment.

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DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Question (3 Hansard)

Senator Nettle asked:

Has the department undertaken any research on evaluations of citizenship tests conducted by the US, UK or Canadian governments? Is there any evidence about whether the tests improve the cohesiveness of the community?

Answer:

Our enquiries indicate that, to date, the United Kingdom and Canadian governments have not conducted any formal evaluations of their citizenship tests.

The Citizenship and Immigration Services directorate of the United States Department of Homeland Security is currently revising the US citizenship test to increase both uniformity and meaningfulness. This process includes developing a set of 100 equally weighted questions from which each test consisting of 10 questions will be drawn.

Our enquiries indicate that none of the countries have, to date, investigated whether their citizenship tests have improved the cohesiveness of their respective communities.

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DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Question (4 Hansard)

Senator Nettle asked:

Can you advise whether you are aware of any other surveys, opinion polls or advice which indicate the view of the Australian public about the citizenship test, the inclusion of English or related matters?

Answer:

The department is aware of one other survey relating to the citizenship test:

- A Newspoll survey, taken for The Australian in September 2006, showed that 77% of respondents agreed that there should be a citizenship test that includes an English language test and questions about our history and our way of life.

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DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Question (5 Hansard)

Senator Barnett asked:

Could you clarify the measures that provide support for people to learn English and outline the costs or the investment by the government in those measures?

Answer:

Commonwealth Funded English Language Programmes

There are four key English language training programmes funded by the Commonwealth:

- a legislative entitlement of 510 hours under the *Immigration (Education) Act 1971* provided through the Adult Migrant English Programme;
- up to 800 hours over two years of vocationally-focused English language training available through the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme;
- the employer supported Workplace English Language and Literacy programme, which offers vocationally integrated language, literacy and numeracy training in the workplace and is co-funded by employers and the Commonwealth; and
- The English as a Second Language - New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Programme provides funding to state and territory government and non-government education authorities to assist with the cost of delivering intensive English language tuition to eligible newly arrived migrant primary and secondary school students.

The **Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP)** administered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) provides English language tuition for eligible adult migrants and humanitarian entrants who do not have functional English. Humanitarian entrants under the age of 25 with low levels of schooling are eligible for up to 910 hours of English language tuition while those over 25 who have had difficult pre-migration experiences (eg torture and trauma) are eligible for up to 610 hours of tuition. Other migrants are eligible for up to 510 hours of tuition. Tuition is designed to provide clients with basic language skills to assist them to settle successfully in Australia. Eligibility is extended under policy on a case by case basis to recently arrived 16-18 year olds where education authorities assess that they cannot be accommodated in the school system. Attachment A provides an overview of entitlements for particular groups, the curriculum and service delivery arrangements.

The **Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP)**, administered by Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), is for job seekers aged 15 – 64 registered with Centrelink who have low level English language, or literacy and numeracy skills which are a barrier to achieving employment or further training. Clients are referred to the LLNP by Centrelink or Providers of Australian Government Employment Services (PAGES). The programme seeks to improve clients' language, literacy and/or numeracy with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force and lead to greater gains for society in the longer term. The programme entitlement is up to 800 hours in a two year period for eligible clients. [Attachment B](#) provides an overview of entitlements, the curriculum and service delivery arrangements.

The **Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme (WELL)**, administered by DEST, provides funding to employers to provide workplace-based English language, literacy and numeracy training for employees. Registered Training Organisations deliver this training in the workplace, embedded in vocational education tailored to the needs of the individual business. The Commonwealth provides grants of up to 75 per cent of an organisation's WELL approved training costs in the first year, and 50 per cent in the second and third years. Funding from the programme can also be used to develop strategic or resource materials to support training within or across industries. [Attachment C](#) provides an overview of entitlements for particular groups, the curriculum and service delivery arrangements.

English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Programme

The ESL-NA Programme provides funding to state and territory government and non-government education authorities to assist with the cost of delivering intensive English language tuition to eligible newly arrived migrant primary and secondary school students who are locally assessed as requiring this support. Education authorities are paid a per capita contribution for each eligible student.

In the 2007-08 Budget, the Australian Government announced additional funding of around \$127.8 million for an initiative to double the per capita contribution for students entering under the Humanitarian Programme in recognition of their higher needs. As a result, it is estimated that over the period 2005-2008 \$311 million will be provided to education authorities under the ESL-NA Programme. As the ESL-NA Programme is demand driven, all eligible students will be funded. [Attachment D](#) provides an overview of entitlements for particular groups, the curriculum and service delivery arrangements.

ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAMME (AMEP)

Entitlements:

- refugee and humanitarian entrants under the age of 25 with low levels of schooling are eligible for up to 910 hours of English language tuition;
- those over 25 who have experienced difficult pre migration experiences such as torture and trauma are eligible for up to 610 hours of tuition;
- other migrants are eligible for up to 510 hours of tuition; and
- eligibility is extended under policy on a case by case basis to recently arrived 16-18 year olds where education authorities assess that they cannot be accommodated in the school system.

Process

Eligible migrants are referred to AMEP by their sponsor, IHSS provider, Centrelink, or by self-referral. Clients are required to register for AMEP within three months of arrival and commence classes within 12 months. Under policy, there is no time limit for completion of the AMEP hourly entitlement. AMEP service providers conduct an assessment of each individual's English language skill. This assessment includes identification of learning needs and development of an individual learning plan. On completion of a minimum of 460 hours of AMEP tuition, clients may be referred to other Commonwealth funded English language programmes such as the LLNP.

Delivery

AMEP training is administered nationally through eighteen tuition contracts with service providers around Australia. The programme is delivered in approximately 250 locations. Clients may choose from the following range of learning options: full or part-time classroom tuition in formal or community based settings; a Distance Learning course for clients to learn at home with curriculum materials specifically designed for out-of-classroom learning, supported by regular telephone contact with a qualified teacher; the Home Tutor Scheme which provides language assistance by a trained volunteer usually on a one-to-one basis in the client's home; and individual learning through Individual Learning Centers.

Service providers may also provide ongoing educational counselling, identification of clients with special needs, advice on options for further study, referral to mainstream services, including Commonwealth funded employment assistance. Service providers can also arrange childcare, if required, for under-school-age children of clients during class times.

Funding:

- \$139.9m for 2005-06
- \$156.1m for 2006-07
- \$166.5m for 2007-08

AMEP clients by migration category – 2005-06

Migration Category	Number of Clients	Percentage
Family	23,353	59%
Humanitarian	10,937	27%
Skilled	5,617	14%
Total	39,907	100%

Curriculum

The curriculum used is the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE). The CSWE curriculum framework provides students with the flexibility to access English tuition through the following learning modes: face-to-face; distance, with teacher support and materials; and e-learning. Within each CSWE level, students work at the level appropriate to their needs, interests and abilities. The modular approach adopted enables students to focus on general skills development or choose a particular area such as listening, speaking, reading, writing or numeracy. Students may choose high, medium or low-intensity courses of study and may vary their choice to meet changing needs. Classes are scheduled after hours and on weekends depending on demand.

Within the curriculum framework, syllabus design or content of the course is flexible depending on the needs/wants of the students. For example, the content will cover issues such as employment, health and nutrition issues, law and order, banking, and cooking. Depending on the student needs at the CSWE III level students may be provided with resume writing assistance and coached in interview techniques. Several of the courses act as pathways to further educational studies such as certificates in child or aged care or assist clients to work towards getting a drivers licence.

The most recent edition of CSWE includes *A Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English*, a pre-Certificate I course developed for students with no previous contact with English or whose skills have been assessed as being very elementary. This course covers recognition of the alphabet and numbers, social sight words and signs, basic form filling and social interaction.

Assessment

Students undertake an initial assessment across the four macro-skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Student performance determines the entry point into CSWE.

Language Literacy Numeracy Programme (LLNP)

The **Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP)**, administered by Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), is for job seekers aged 15 – 64 registered with Centrelink who have low level English language, or literacy and numeracy skills which are a barrier to achieving employment or further training. Clients are referred to the LLNP by Centrelink or Providers of Australian Government Employment Services (PAGES). The programme seeks to improve clients' language, literacy and/or numeracy with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force and lead to greater gains for society in the longer term. The programme entitlement is up to 800 hours in a two year period for eligible clients and its client focused training is flexibly delivered in recognition of the diverse needs of clients.

Training streams:

- training services with a language training focus in three streams – initial, basic and advanced; and
- training services with a literacy/numeracy training focus in two streams – basic and advanced.

In addition, the following additional training services (subject to budget allocations) may be offered:

- advanced stream, vocationally-oriented courses; and
- complementary training which seeks to assist clients with particular disadvantage.

Delivery

Providers are contracted to deliver either training and assessment services or independent verification services. The independent verifiers are responsible for the quality assurance of reported educational outcomes and to assist in trainers' professional development through the conduct of moderation workshops in each state and territory. The purpose of these workshops is to allow those who deliver the training an opportunity to share knowledge and experience.

Following referral to the LLNP through Centrelink or PAGES a comprehensive assessment of the client's language, literacy and numeracy competencies is undertaken to ensure that they receive training appropriate to their level. A tailored individual training plan is developed with the client taking account of the client's needs, aspirations and interests.

Clients either attend part-time for a minimum of 10 hours per week or on a full-time basis which is 20 hours per week. Training is delivered in classes of no more than 20 participants and providers are able to use any accredited curricula they feel is best suited to meet the agreed client LLN learning outcomes.

There are currently thirty-eight (38) organisations contracted to provide face-to-face training services from over 340 locations, and by distance education for those participants who have

carer responsibilities or who don't have ready access to a face-to-face provider. Contracts with all current providers expire on 30 June 2009.

Approximately 54% of the estimated LLNP business has been contracted to TAFEs or universities and 46% to not for profit, community or private providers.

Funding:

- \$57.776m for 2007-08
- \$56.656m for 2008-09

There is increased funding of \$8.2 million over the three years from July 2006 for 2,900 new LLNP places to accommodate the flow of additional clients with new obligations to seek employment under the provisions of the government's *Welfare to Work* initiative.

Evaluation

The LLNP was evaluated and reviewed in late 2004 /early 2005. The review found that the programme is an appropriate intervention to address low literacy and English language levels and associated social and economic problems. The review also found that the programme supported key Australian Government policies, including migration policies and those associated with welfare reform. Following the evaluation, measures to improve educational outcomes and administration/financial management in the new programme guidelines and provider contracts including:

- streaming of clients into appropriate training;
- introducing 160 hour blocks of training to improve client completion rates;
- recording client learning outcomes upon exit of each block of training;
- increasing the emphasis on independent verification, moderation workshops, performance management and on trainer/assessor qualifications to improve programme quality;
- increasing opportunities for complementary training to assess the needs of specific client groups (eg Indigenous Australians, young males, isolated females) which achieve poor outcomes in normal classes;
- revising the payment arrangements to encourage improved programme outcomes (ie stronger incentives to providers to have clients complete blocks of training); and
- re-developing the programme's supporting IT system.

Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme (WELL)

The WELL, administered by DEST, provides funding to employers to provide workplace-based English language, literacy and numeracy training for employees. Registered Training Organisations deliver this training in the workplace, embedded in vocational education tailored to the needs of the individual business. The Commonwealth provides grants of up to 75 per cent of an organisation's WELL approved training costs in the first year, and 50 per cent in the second and third years. Funding from the programme can also be used to develop strategic or resource materials to support training within or across industries.

Objectives:

- assist existing employees to undertake training essential to retaining their job and to progress in the workplace by integrating English language, literacy and numeracy (including information and communications technology) training and support with vocational and technical education delivered in the workplace;
- assist employers to see the value of English language, literacy and numeracy training in achieving business and workplace training goals; and
- support resource development and strategic activities that improve the uptake of English language, literacy and numeracy training within and between industries.

Programme types:

The Australian Government provides funding to the following types of projects:

- language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) training for groups of workers (usually 10 or more) and support provided in the workplace and integrated with vocational training;
- resources that can be used in supporting LLN training; and
- strategic projects with a national scope that support LLN training across one or more industry sectors.

Client group

In 2006/2007, 3683 (21%) participants were from a non-English speaking background. Statistics are not kept on those participants who are new immigrants.

Budget

In 2007/2008, \$14.822 million is available to train approximately 20,000 workers at various worksites.

Evaluation

An evaluation of the programme was conducted in 2006. The results of the evaluation were very positive and demonstrated that WELL satisfied key stakeholders. It found that in addition to addressing identified skills shortages and reducing the risk that Australian workers become welfare dependent due to low language, literacy, numeracy and vocational skills, WELL improves the transition of immigrants to productive employment and citizenship. It found WELL to be a unique programme providing workplace-based LLN training embedded in vocational training tailored to the needs of individual businesses. The evaluation also found that WELL supplements but does not duplicate LLN skill development provided by AMEP for those from non-English speaking backgrounds

The evaluation made a number of recommendations including broadening the programme target group to include Australian Apprentices with low levels of language, literacy and numeracy, and to have a particular focus on humanitarian entrants and refugees.

As a result of the positive evaluation, on 22 January 2007 Minister Bishop announced additional funding of \$74.9 million for 20,000 new places per year over the four years 2007/2008 to 2010/2011.

English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Programme

The ESL-NA Programme, administered by DEST, provides funding to education authorities to help with the provision of intensive teaching of the English language to certain students who have recently arrived in Australia. A per capita grant is provided to education authorities for each eligible student – the Programme is demand driven.

Objectives:

The Programme aims to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of newly arrived students of non-English speaking backgrounds by developing their English language competence and facilitating their participation in mainstream educational activities.

Nature of funding:

Per capita grant for every eligible student:

- Initial rate of funding for 2007 is \$5,277 per eligible student – this will be supplemented later in the year in line with the Average Government School Recurrent Cost Index to maintain the real value of the grant.
- In 2008 refugee and humanitarian entrant students will attract double the rate of other eligible students.
- Funds may be used at the discretion of the educational authority for such purposes as:
 - the employment of specialist teachers, including bilingual teachers, to teach ESL in a variety of situations, including but not restricted to:
 - intensive and part-time withdrawal instruction;
 - parallel and team teaching;
 - assistance to regular teachers to enable them to attend more effectively to English language development across the curriculum for ESL learners;
 - the employment of advisory staff, interpreters, translators, bilingual welfare officers, teachers aides and school-community liaison workers;
 - curriculum development and the provision of ESL teaching and learning materials;
 - the provision of small items of equipment such as teaching aids. (Funds may not otherwise be used for capital purposes); or
 - the provision of ESL in-service courses for ESL specialists as well as mainstream teachers.

Client group

Newly arrived students enrolling in Australian primary and secondary schools. Unless determined otherwise by the Minister, in order to be eligible students are required to be:

- Either:
 - Australian citizens or hold permanent residency status; or
 - be minors (under 18 years of age at the time of enrolling in the initial course of intensive English language instruction) and

- accepted as a temporary migrant under any part of the Australian Government's Humanitarian Programme; or
 - holding a provisional visa granted under the Business Skills Category of the Australian Government's Non-Humanitarian Migration Program; or
 - holding a provisional visa granted under the Family Migration Stream of the Australian Government's Non-Humanitarian Migration Programme and who will start school for the first time in Australia after 1 January 2007; or
 - holding a Removal Pending Bridging Visa;
- and
 - at the time of enrolling in the initial course of intensive English language instruction, be undertaking primary or secondary education at a government or non-government school, or have an intention to undertake such education as soon as practicable after completion of the course; and
 - if entering the first year of primary schooling, to have enrolled in an intensive English class funded under this Programme within 18 months of arrival in Australia or being granted a temporary visa under the Humanitarian Programme; or
 - if entering any other year of schooling, have enrolled in an intensive English class funded under this Programme within six months of arrival in Australia or being granted a temporary visa under the Humanitarian Programme.

Budget

An estimated \$311 million will be provided under the ESL-NA Programme over the 2005-2008 schools funding quadrennium. In 2006, \$69.1 million was provided to education authorities under the ESL-NA Programme.

Evaluation

The ESL-NA Programme has been reviewed three times (1982, 1992 and 2001). In addition the Programme is part of the quadrennial funding arrangements for schools, and as such is re-examined each time quadrennial funding is renewed.