



AGMC Inc.
'Living & Loving in Diversity'
Reg No. A0047780G

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Submission

of

**the Australian Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
and Queer Multicultural Council Inc
("the AGMC Inc")**

to

the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

with reference to the inquiry into

**the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill 2007
("the Bill")**

The AGMC Inc
PO Box 342,
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2 July 2007

1. Committee members of the AGMC Inc (“committee members” or its singular variant) welcome the opportunity to comment on the *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill 2007* (“the Bill”). The Bill provides for the testing of prospective applicants for Australian citizenship by conferral, and requires applicants for Australian citizenship to have successfully completed a citizenship test, before making an application, in order to be eligible to become Australian citizens.
2. Committee members expressed no strong views either in favor or against the Bill except as set out below.
3. A committee member expressed strong reservations as to whether a citizenship test would necessarily help prospective citizens with successful integration into Australian society. The committee member offered these other comments:
 - The current citizenship requirements appear to have served Australia well;
 - The proposed test is patronizing as it reduces Australia’s history to a few questions;
 - The proposed test assesses a person’s knowledge of Australian values but does not require prospective citizens to make an continuing commitment to these values; and
 - An ongoing education programs would be better suited to achieving successful integration within Australian society.
4. Another committee member thinks that proficiency in English and a commitment to Australian values, however difficult these may be to define, are necessary prerequisites for the citizen’s integration and full effective participation in the processes of Australian society.
5. All committee members of the AGMC Inc submit that any questions dealing with social justice and inclusion should clearly set out Australia’s commitment to these values even with respect to sexual minorities. The AGMC Inc further submits that any references to ethnic and other minorities in the proposed test should also include references to members of sexual minorities.