

Flaws in the citizen test

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Minister Alan Tudge has announced changes to the Citizenship test that we subject applicants to. The tests are supposedly now going to include "Australian values". Let me make a few points in this regard:

I did the test myself and I am pleased to say that I did get 100%. So my comments are not coming from a disgruntled person who failed the test. I have been an Australian citizen for around 40 years.

1. Equality of men and women in Australia- Yes I agree that it is not the same in all countries. We, in Australia, have had one woman PM. Other countries such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan etc have had one or more and a long time before we elected Julia Gillard. Further, in the top 200 companies here, only 10 have female CEO's. So we have a long way to go in Australia to achieve equality.
2. What do we achieve by subjecting someone to a test 4 years after they come here to reside as a Permanent Resident? If they fail - they remain here and function as per normal but can't vote or work in the public service. I don't know that many would lose any sleep over those restrictions.
3. Passing a Citizenship test does not make you a better citizen, just like getting a drivers licence does not make you a better driver.
4. Those things that Minister Tudge refers to as "Australian" values are hardly unique to us. They are good societal values at best.
5. If there was ONE thing that I would rather see the Minister spend money on to help people integrate better and achieve social cohesion in Australian society -I would request the funding of Transcultural Mental Health Networks because we have none. I would ask all Coroners' offices to keep suicide Ethnicity data so I can ascertain which cultural groups have a higher propensity to suicide. This will help me also work out what mental health services we need to have.

There is so much to do in terms of "getting on with each other" and Citizenship tests achieve nothing in terms of the integration principles. We are also a LONG way behind in testing the applicants for citizenship now. Let us address those things and the issues above before we go changing the questions in the test to satisfy some nationalist bigotry!

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