



# RESPONSE TO THE CITIZENSHIP TEST

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA  
RESOLUTION 08.25

*It was resolved to:*

- 08.25.01 express to the Commonwealth Government its opposition to the continued use of the Australian Citizenship Test; and
- 08.25.02 request the General Secretary to include the grounds for the Church's opposition to the citizenship test in his correspondence with the Government.

Rationale

The Assembly opposes the Australian Citizenship Test on the following grounds:

1. It inevitably fails to comprehend the nature of citizenship, which has a rich and complex history actually misrepresented by the test.
2. The attempt to embody so-called 'Australian values' in a citizenship test implies a slanted and unnuanced history of Australia told from a point of view approved by the government of the day. The appeal to folk legend and the prominence of sporting heroes in understanding the nature of Australian society is irrelevant to the actual exercise of citizenship.
3. Regardless of their performance at a 'citizenship test', the presence of people with diverse cultural backgrounds contributes significantly to the enrichment of a multifaceted community. Compliance with a stipulated test tends towards assimilation and works against the enhancement of multiculturalism.
4. The presence of new residents in Australia already requires compliance with the laws of the country, rendering the test redundant.
5. The type of questions asked of prospective citizens tends to trivialise the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
6. Aspects of the test are potentially excluding of certain people.