

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs and Aid Subcommittee
Inquiry into certain aspects of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Annual
Report 2019-20 - Myanmar

QoN Number: 02

Subject: Pathways for citizens of Myanmar to stay in Australia

Asked by: David Fawcett

Question:

Senator FAWCETT: Can I suggest that we ask the department—probably Home Affairs—to take on notice the question which is, I think, in essence: except for character or conduct grounds which are prejudicial to Australia's interests, is it the government's intent to provide a pathway for citizens of Myanmar who are currently in Australia to remain here until the situation in Myanmar is resolved? That will give you the opportunity to go back and check with the minister, and then come back both to the committee and, through the committee, to the Australian public, to indicate what the government's intent is.

Mr Wilden: We'll happily take that on notice.

Answer:

On 5 May 2021, Minister Hawke announced that Myanmar nationals in Australia, who are affected by the ongoing unrest, can apply for a new visa to extend their stay in Australia. This announcement is consistent with Australia's international obligations.

The Department has not made any changes to existing visa programs. However, the Department is encouraging Myanmar nationals to utilise a range of visa options, both permanent and temporary, to extend their stay in Australia.

Individuals who wish to seek Australia's protection, and are found to engage Australia's *non-refoulement* (non-return) obligations, may be granted permanent protection provided they fulfil the relevant visa criteria, including health, character and security requirements.