

DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Inquiry into the Working Holiday Maker program

3 August 2020

QoN Number: 05

Subject: Working Holiday Makers Program - bridging visas

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Mr HILL: ... Finally, if a working holiday-maker's visa expires before another visa is granted, but they're still in the country, do they fit onto bridging visas then? What happens to them?

Mr Willard: Yes, if they've lodged an application for another visa, they'll shift onto a bridging visa once their first substantive visa expires.

Mr HILL: How many people formerly on working holiday-maker visas are now on bridging visas? Are you able to give us information on that, as of this month?

Mr Willard: I don't have it to hand, but we can take that one on notice.

...

Mr HILL: ... Given someone's helpfully passing you pieces of paper, perhaps they could also check how many bridging visas are currently issued in Australia, as of now, and how many people are on bridging visas in the country in total?

Mr Willard: I'll have to take that one on notice. I just want to confirm the questions.

The first one is how many people who have applied for a working holiday-maker visa are on a bridging visa.

Mr HILL: That's right. I'm curious about the total, and then, within the total pool, how many have applied for or were on a working holiday-maker most recently as their substantive visa. I'm trying to understand more broadly the explosion in the number of people on bridging visas. The latest data I've got is that there were 333,000—and something in April, which is a pretty astounding figure. It was already completely out of control with illegal aeroplane arrivals and the clampdown on partner visas—people hanging around for years, waiting for their substantive visa. The government was manipulating the numbers each year, but it now seems to have gotten completely out of control. I've got an open mind as to why that is. It might just be the pandemic that is forcing people onto bridging visas, and that's appropriate, but it would be good to get a breakdown of how much of the cohort on bridging visas relates to working holiday-makers.

Mr Willard: We'll take that one on notice for you, Mr Hill.

Mr HILL: Thank you.

Answer:

As at 31 July 2020:

- There were 313,824 Bridging visa (BV) holders in Australia, of whom 4.43 per cent last held a Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417 or 462) visa.
- 13,899 Bridging visa holders in Australia last held a Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417 or 462) visa. Of these, 13,457 held a BVA, BVB or BVC in association with a substantive visa application.