



Mining and agricultural groups attend 457 visa inquiry

Federal parliament's Migration Committee will be holding a public hearing in Perth on Monday 30 April as part of its inquiry into temporary business visas, including the 457 visa and labour agreements.

The committee will hear from the Australian Mines and Metals Association, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA, Rural Enterprises and the WA Department of Agriculture.

Immigration department figures show that the Western Australian mining and agriculture sectors were the largest users of the 457 visa program for the six months through to December 2006 compared to these sectors in other states and territories.

"Strong economic growth in Western Australia in particular has led to skills shortages in key industry sectors," Committee Chairman Don Randall said.

"Australia's temporary business visas are playing an important role in attracting people with the skills Australia needs. We therefore want to see if the current arrangements for these visas are functioning efficiently or need to be improved."

The Committee will also take evidence from Austal Ships and Baker Hughes Australia Pty Ltd.

The Committee is examining the adequacy of current eligibility requirements for temporary business visas. It will also look at the effectiveness of monitoring, enforcement and reporting arrangements.

Public hearing schedule on 30 April 2007

VENUE: Commonwealth Offices, Stock Exchange Plaza, 2 The Esplanade, Perth

9.30 am	Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA
10.15 am	WA Department of Agriculture and Food
11.15 am	Baker Hughes Australia Pty Ltd
11.45 am	Rural Enterprises
1.30 pm	Australian Mines and Metals Association
2.15 pm	Austal Ships

Further details on the inquiry can be obtained on the committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/457visas/index.htm> or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560 or emailing jscm@aph.gov.au.

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chairman, Don Randall MP, on (02) 6277 2090 (Canberra) or (08) 9390 1211 (electorate office).

For background information, including the full terms of reference, please visit the inquiry website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/mig/457visas/index.htm> or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4560.