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Clarifications and questions taken on notice at the hearing

Transcript M3:

CHAIR – I will come back to the fee shortly. Could you give us an update on your personnel and your budget. I believe it was \$6 million last year – is that correct?

Ms Connell – I believe so.

Mr Thomas – In terms of revenue, Chair?

CHAIR – Is it \$6 million?

Mr Thomas – Somewhere around that figure. I think it was about \$5.8 million.

Clarification

TRA revenue for the 2004-05 financial year was \$6.2 million.

Transcript M4:

CHAIR – If people wish to contact you in Perth they have to do so over the internet or by phone. Your phone hours are from two to five on Mondays and nine to 12 on Friday. Is that correct?

Mr Thomas – That is correct.

Clarification

TRA phone hours for international applicants are as follows:

Monday 2 – 5pm (AEST)

Wednesday 2 – 5pm (AEST)

Friday 9 – 3pm (AEST)

For domestic applicants contact hours are normal business hours, Monday to Friday.

During times when the phone service is not attended, TRA can still be contacted at all times via message bank.

TRA can also be contacted via email 24hrs a day, 7 days a week. All emails are responded to the same or next working day. We receive on average 60-70 emails a day.

Transcript M10

CHAIR – I will make the point again. I believe that, in the current climate, all applicants would consider themselves as priority applications because they want a quick turnaround. That is one of the criticisms. I would not mind knowing, if you could give me the feedback, how many international and domestic people pay \$500 and how many pay \$300 – the percentages and the raw numbers.

Clarification

For the period 1 July 2005 to the end of February 2006:

- 59% of international applicants paid a \$500 fee (7,324 applicants)

- 41% of international applicants paid a \$300 fee (5,050 applicants)

Transcript M9:

Mr Thomas – Some 82.6 per cent of international applications have been approved. We have not got a figure for domestic ones.

CHAIR – Can you take that no notice and get that, please?

Mr Thomas – Certainly.

Clarification

Trades Recognition Australia application trends, 1988–89 to 2005–06

	International Stream	Success Rate (per cent)	Domestic Stream	Success Rate (per cent)	Total Received
1988-89	5,726	55	5,123	*	10,849
1989-90	7,081	55	5,399	*	12,480
1990-91	7,943	54	5,803	*	13,746
1991-92	5,283	47	5,249	*	10,532
1992-93	3,787	53	4,163	*	7,950
1993-94	3,681	63	4,418	*	8,099
1994-95	5,639	63	2,948	*	8,587
1995-96	5,461	62	3,483	64	8,944
1996-97	3,321	58	1,980	71	5,301
1997-98	2,544	66	1,218	82	3,762
1998-99**	3,569	72	1,135	82	4,704
1999-00**	5,692	70	860	85	6,552
2000-01	6,955	75	786	88	7,741
2001-02	7,190	78	757	87	7,947
2002-03	8,798	67	834	81	9,632
2003-04	9,979	63	1,075	83	11,054
2004-05	14,189	63	1,140	78	15,340
2005-06#	12,374	83	905	77	13,279

* These figures are not available.

** These figures are the number of applicants, not applications.

Figures are to 28 February 2006.

Transcript M12:

Senator PARRY—Good. Chair, if I could ask that when that information is provided maybe that table could be updated and we could see it on the extension of that table. That would help us when we see that again. With that break-up of the table, do you have a geographical analysis of the domestic and international applications—although for international it would be hard to work out what domicile area of Australia they would apply to, but certainly for domestic?

Mr Thomas—We could provide a breakdown of the domestic application numbers.

Clarification

Geographical distribution of domestic applications, 2003–04 to 2005–06

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	NT	Tas	Total
2003–04	150	287	360	171	94	6	7	1,075
2004–05	177	334	330	183	106	5	5	1,140
2005–06 [#]	135	184	263	181	130	5	7	905

Figures are to 28 February 2006.

Note: NSW applications include those from the ACT.

Transcript M19:

CHAIR – I can assure you that one of the committee’s recommendations will be that you bring your time frames forward. So you might want to get on with that sooner rather than later. I can assure you we will be impressing that upon the ministers involved.

Finally, we have heard from VETASSESS that they are sometimes commissioned by TRA to process a number of applications to clear the backlog. From evidence, we have heard that VETASSESS seem to be a popular organisation and get the job done. Do you think VETASSESS could take over your responsibilities and do them far more efficiently?

Mr Thomas – VETASSESS do not undertake assessment of applications on behalf of TRA. As I understand it –

CHAIR – That is the evidence we received. You commission them to deal with your backlog.

Ms Connell – That is not correct, Chair.

Mr Jamonts – No, that is not correct. We commission VETASSESS as and when required to assist us in carrying out non-prudential assessments for AQF applicants in certain occupations – which is the equivalent of a trade test.

Clarification

At no time has TRA passed pre migration skills assessments to other assessment agencies ‘to clear the backlog’.

The backlog of applications that TRA have cleared has been the result of intense effort by TRA employees and the effectiveness of the reengineering of its processes.

TRA has occasionally used VETASSESS to carry out the equivalent of trade tests for international stream applicants. This exercise was to verify the capability of applicants that had completed an AQF.

TRA’s assessment methodology for pre migration skills assessment is completely different to that of VETASSESS. TRA examines a person’s qualifications, skills and experience, and recognition of prior learning to determine eligibility for trade status. A TRA assessment considers whether an applicant possesses the skills, knowledge and experience expected of an Australian trained person.

In contrast, VETASSESS looks strictly at post-secondary educational qualifications against the requirements of the nominated occupations under the GSM Programme and Employer Nomination Scheme. Work experience is not required for a successful VETASSESS assessment. Also, the qualification does not have to be specifically related to the applicant’s nominated position.