

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017**

**IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO**

**(BE17/134) - Temporary skilled workers - ChAFTA - Programme 2.3: Visas**

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 92) asked:

Senator PRATT: I note that the Australian and Chinese governments announced a review of the investment facilitation memorandum of understanding attached to the China free trade agreement. It is my understanding that that MOU is separate from the main trade agreement and is not legally binding and that it could be cancelled by the Australian government. That MOU allows employers with infrastructure projects valued at \$150 million with a minimum of 15 per cent Chinese investment to bring in unlimited numbers of temporary skilled workers without testing whether local workers are available. I note that no other trade agreements have similar arrangements. Are you able to advise whether the review of the investment facilitation memorandum will, in fact, result in the cancellation of that labour MOU?

Mr Wilden: The IFA, as you said, is a side agreement to the free trade agreement. There has only been one application and it was withdrawn, so there are no agreements in play. The responsibility for the IFA is with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, so any review will be undertaken by them.

Senator PRATT: There has been one application that was cancelled. For what project was that?

Mr Wilden: An expression of interest was put forward and before it was progressed they withdrew.

Senator PRATT: For what project was that?

Mr Wilden: I will take that on notice.

*Answer:*

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the responsible authority for assessing IFA requests.