

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 9 FEBRUARY 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(114) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Humphries asked:

The 2009-10 MYEFO announced that the Government was spending \$1.7 million over 4 years to enhance the integrity of the Working Holiday Maker visa program. Components of this initiative include specified employers to register the employment of WHMs with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and reducing the period of time that a visa holder may stay with a specified employer.

- (1) Have there been integrity issues associated with this visa?
- (2) If so, how long has the Government been aware of these issues?
- (3) Did the Government consider any options to resolve the integrity issues associated with the Working Holiday Maker visa?
- (4) What were those policy alternatives?
- (5) What are the types of industries that will be affected by this initiative?
- (6) What consultation has the Government undertaken with main sectors affected by these measures?
- (7) What has been the outcome of any such consultations?
- (8) How will the cost of this measure be met within the existing resourcing of the Department?
- (9) Will other activities provided by the Department lose resourcing as result of these measures being implemented?

Answer:

1. As with all visa programs there is a potential for integrity issues to develop.
2. As with all visa programs monitoring for potential integrity issues is ongoing.
3. It is long standing practice not to discuss policy advice to the Government, or details considered by Cabinet.
4. It is long standing practice not to discuss policy advice to the Government, or details considered by Cabinet.
5. Specific industries are not affected.
6. Consultation is ongoing.

7. Consultation is ongoing.
8. Savings offsets will be identified within the Department's budget.
9. Any savings identified would not be expected to have a negative impact on the Department's core activities and services.