

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(58) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

If there has been a decline in the number of visas been issued, to what does the Department attribute the decline?

Answer:

In 2009-10, there were 270 499 student visas granted. This is a 15.4% decline compared to 2008-09 where 319 632 student visas were granted. However if we compare student visa grants over a two year period between 2007-08 (when 278 715 student visas were granted) and 2009-10, the decline is only 2.9%. While there has been a decline in the number of visas granted, the grant rate (the number of grants divided by the number of decisions times 100) has increased. For the December quarter in 2009 the grant rate was 84.2% and for the same period in 2010 it was 92.8%.

Lower Student visa grants in 2009-10 can be attributed to a decline in Student visa applications which fell by 18.9% between 2008-09 and 2009-10, and a range of external factors that influence worldwide demand for Australian education. These factors include the higher Australian dollar, the effects of the global financial crisis on source countries, competition from other English speaking countries, college closures and media coverage overseas on student safety issues.

The decline in Student visa applications may, to some extent, be attributed to the recent skilled migration visa reforms, including the introduction of the new Skilled Occupations List, and increased student visa integrity measures.