

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0158) Program 1.1: Enterprise Migration Agreements

Senator Cash (L&CA 34-35) asked:

Enterprise Migration Agreements: Please provide the feedback (without identifying those that made the concerns) that was received by the department in relation to potentially lowering the workforce and why lowering the workforce from 1,500 to 1,000 would be appropriate way to go.

Answer:

The National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce recommended that EMAs be made available to a select number of projects, described as 'mega' projects of national significance. Given the 'mega' status, the Government considered it would be appropriate to have in place thresholds for access.

One threshold is that a project must have a peak workforce of 1500 in order to be eligible for an EMA. This setting effectively balances the need to be responsive to industry while targeting key projects that have genuine 'mega' status.

A small minority of industry stakeholders have argued that EMAs should be available to projects with a lower peak workforce of 1000. However, given that EMAs are specifically implemented to provide a more streamlined pathway for 'mega' projects without limiting other migration pathways, the Government considered it appropriate to maintain a peak workforce level of 1500.

Projects that do not meet the 1500 peak workforce criteria are able to access other pathways including the standard 457 visa program or a labour agreement for large resource projects.