

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0186) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

The Government has said that it supports in principle all of Mr Knight's recommendations. It has also said however that some recommendations will be modified. Which recommendations are to be modified and how? How will these modifications enhance the performance of the Australian education sector and to better safeguard the integrity of the visa system?

Answer:

The Government has agreed that the following Knight Review recommendations will be modified:

- it is planned that the recommendations relating to the proposed post-study work arrangements (recommendations 4 and 8) would be extended to Bachelor or higher degree graduates from other education providers accredited to offer degree level programs, in addition to university graduates. Also, eligibility for the post-study work visa will be subject to applicants meeting certain requirements. Eligibility will not be guaranteed; and
- it is planned that all 42 universities operating in Australia would be offered the opportunity to benefit from the proposed streamlined visa processing arrangements (recommendations three, five, six and eighteen).

In addition, on 5 November 2011 the Government introduced an additional measure which reduced the financial requirements, by up to around \$36 000, for higher risk Assessment Level (AL) 3 and AL4 student visa applicants. This change was introduced to ease financial pressures for applicants and to assist the non-university sector.

These changes are intended to assist the sector to be more internationally competitive.