

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0207) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

In the answer to SE11/0159 it is stated that the median processing time for subclass 457 visas granted under a Labour Agreement in 2010-11 was 19 days, yet the answer to SE11/0161 illustrates that over half of the agreements from the 2010-11 program year have yet to be decided – they have been with the Department for at least six months –how can this be the case?

Answer:

The two answers are not directly related: the first refers to the processing time for visas granted under labour agreements that have already been approved; the second refers to the negotiation time for agreements still undecided.

A labour agreement must have been negotiated and signed before any visas can be granted in relation to it.

SE11/0161 from Supplementary Budget Estimates of October 2011 illustrated that 30 of the labour agreement submissions from the 2010-11 program year had, at that time, yet to be decided. Labour agreements involve rigorous assessment of large amounts of information and therefore take some time to negotiate. As such, anticipated processing times for complete submissions are approximately 4-6 months.

Subclass 457 nominations and visa applications lodged under a labour agreement can only be granted when the labour agreement has been executed (signed by the Commonwealth representative and the company).

As referred to in SE11/0159 from Supplementary Budget Estimates of October 2011, the median processing time for Subclass 457 visas granted under a Labour Agreement in 2010-11 was 19 days.