

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0243) Migration and Visa Policy

Senator McKenzie asked:

Late last year the Federal Government broadened its Pacific Island guest worker program. Has there been a resulting change in the number of guest workers travelling to Australia? If so, what is the percentage and number increase? According to The Australian on 8 September 2011, the program had only placed 560 workers since 2008. How many workers have arrived since then?

Answer:

There has been a significant increase in the number of arrivals since the Government's announcement in September 2011 regarding the expansion of the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme (the Pilot) to five new countries: Nauru, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and East Timor. This increase, however, does not involve the new countries included in the expanded Pilot.

After a slow start in which 56 seasonal workers arrived in 2008-09 and 67 seasonal workers arrived in 2009-10, a total of 392 seasonal workers arrived in 2010-11.

So far this program year, 390 seasonal workers have arrived, in comparison to the 54 seasonal workers that arrived during the same period in 2010-11.

As at 31 January 2012, 905 seasonal workers have arrived since the Pilot commenced.

- A break down of seasonal workers' arrival by citizenship and year of arrival is as follows:

Citizenship	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12 (@ 31 January)	Total
Kiribati	-	11	18	15	44
Papua New Guinea	-	-	9	55	64
Tonga	50	56	353	240	699
Vanuatu	6	-	12	80	98
Total	56	67	392	390	905