

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(111) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

1. During an Estimates hearing (22/05/06) DIMA indicated that in the meat industry it is acceptable for 457 visa holders to be authorised at below trade level, namely at ASCO 5, 6, 7. Is it similarly acceptable for workers in other industries to be sponsored under 457 at below trade level? If so, what industries?
2. Can this policy be applied across the board? When can it not be applied?

Answer:

1. Recognising the special needs of regional Australia, arrangements are in place to allow employers operating in defined regional and low population growth areas of Australia to access foreign workers to fill full-time positions classified under ASCO levels 5, 6 and 7. Under these arrangements, regional employers must obtain certification by a Regional Certifying Body (RCB), which are either state government bodies or bodies endorsed by the state/territory government supporting the positions to be filled at ASCO 5, 6 and 7. RCBs confirm that the position is full time and necessary to the business' operations. They must also certify that the position cannot reasonably be filled locally. Positions nominated must exclude apprentice, trainee or assistant positions. Other positions excluded are those that may only be filled by an Australian citizen or permanent resident or where other specific visa arrangements exist. This provision applies to all industries.
2. The regional provisions are accessible, subject to RCB certification, to Australian based businesses in designated regional or low population growth areas. Designated regional or low population growth areas are defined by postcode and include all parts of Australia except Brisbane, Gold Coast, Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong, Melbourne and Perth. These provisions can also be accessed, in highly specific circumstances, via a labour agreement.