

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

#### IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

#### (112) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

1. In relation to the Department's international information and publicity campaign to attract skilled migrants to Australia, can the Committee be given details of this initiative? In what countries, and which cities, have information sessions been conducted in the last two years? Why were these locations selected? Please provide details.

2. Which visa subclasses have been promoted in these activities? How many visas in each category have been granted as a result? Please provide a breakdown by skill category. How many Government officers have been involved in overseas travel to conduct this program? What has been the cost in the last two years? When will the initiative be completed?

*Answer:*

(1) On 14 April 2005 the Minister announced a range of initiatives designed to address skill shortages including an expansion of the Skill Stream of the Migration Programme by 20,000 places in 2005-06 and targeted promotion of skilled migration options. A major element of this promotional campaign is holding skills expos in Australia and overseas.

The Department's expos involved promotion of:

- Employer sponsored visas;
- State and Territory government sponsored visas; and
- Occupations in national shortage and listed on the Migration Occupations in Demand List.

Overseas "Australia Needs Skills" expos have been held in:

|                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| London, England         | 27 to 29 September 2005 |
| Amsterdam, Netherlands  | 3 to 4 October 2005     |
| Berlin, Germany         | 6 to 7 October 2005     |
| Chennai, India          | 11 to 13 October 2005   |
| Kolkata, India          | 10 to 11 March 2006     |
| Shanghai, China         | 9 to 10 May 2006        |
| Hong Kong               | 13 to 14 May 2006       |
| Manila, the Philippines | 17 to 18 May 2006       |

Expo locations were chosen following consultations with State/Territory government offices and employers to identify significant pools of skilled workers with the skills they are seeking. The cities were chosen due to their central and strategic location (London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Manila) and local industries in the surrounding region (mining near Kolkata).

Australian expos were held jointly with State and Territory governments in Brisbane,

Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide.

Other promotional activities include sponsorship of booths at commercial events to inform potential skilled migrants of visa options. The Department has participated in commercial events in America, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, England, Germany, Ireland, Korea, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru and Thailand.

The locations of these activities are driven by opportunities and the likelihood of attracting people with the skills in shortage. Priority is given to events relating to emigration, careers and industry specific events. Promotional material on skilled migration is also made available at other overseas events attended by departmental officers such as those targeting international students, working holiday makers and tourism to Australia.

(2) All skilled visa options are promoted at these events - employer sponsored, State and Territory government sponsored and independent skilled migration.

There are no mechanisms to track people who attended these promotional events in terms of subsequent visa applications noting that there is a range of possible pathways available to prospective skilled migrants. Anecdotal feedback from participating employer groups indicates that the expos did lead to significant numbers of sponsorships as well as subsequent skilled independent applications.

Overseas travel paid by DIMA includes four officers to attend the overseas expos:

- a senior National Office representative;
- an expert on the skill matching database;
- an expert on employer sponsored and general skilled migration; and
- a representative from Trades Recognition Australia in the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio.

The total cost for the events in 2005-06 is \$3.4 million.

The direct costs incurred by the Department for these expos include venue, advertising, coordination (booths), promotional material and freight.

Australian employers are charged \$1,000 (plus GST) per day to participate in these expos under partial cost recovery arrangements. State and Territory governments are not charged for these expos.

The programme is funded for three years: 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08.