

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 MAY 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(11) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Feeney (L&CA 82) asked:

(1) Do you have any statistics in relation to 457 visa holders who are actually in the country and what is happening to them and their numbers? Once again, can you tell us anything about the industry sectors that might be particularly affected?

(2) When was the last time there was a reduction in the stock numbers? In terms of trends, is this an unusual happening?

(3) Is the decline of the stock in April the first ever decline?

Answer:

(1) The table below shows the number of Subclass 457 primary visa holders in Australia at the end of each month in 2008-09 by the industry of the sponsor.

Sponsor Industry	Primary visa holders in Australia '000											% Change 28/02/09 to 31/05/09
	2008						2009					
	31/7	31/8	30/9	31/10	30/11	31/12	31/1	28/2	31/3	30/4	31/5	
Accommodation and Food Services	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.3	-5.2%
Administrative and Support Services	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	22.7%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	-3.7%
Arts and Recreation Services	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	-9.1%
Construction	7.5	7.9	8.2	8.5	8.6	6.4	8.8	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.3	-7.8%
Education and Training	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.3	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	-3.7%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	-3.8%
Financial and Insurance Services	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.3	3.5	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.7	-9.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.5	11.9	12.2	12.3	12.3	11.6	12.7	12.9	13.0	12.8	12.6	-2.4%

Sponsor Industry	Primary visa holders in Australia '000											% Change 28/02/09 to 31/05/09
	2008						2009					
	31/7	31/8	30/9	31/10	30/11	31/12	31/1	28/2	31/3	30/4	31/5	
Information Media and Telecommunications	5.9	5.9	6.1	6.1	6.2	5.2	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.8	-7.2%
Manufacturing	8.8	9.1	9.3	9.5	9.5	7.8	9.5	9.6	9.3	9.1	8.9	-7.4%
Mining	5.5	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.3	5.0	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.8	-7.5%
Other Services	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.8	5.0	4.4	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.4	-9.7%
Professional, Scientific and Technical	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-3.0%
Public Administration and Safety	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	2.0%
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.6	7.6	6.2	7.6	7.5	7.3	7.1	6.8	-9.3%
Retail Trade	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	-3.5%
Transport Postal and Warehousing	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5	-5.9%
Wholesale Trade	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	-4.1%
Not Recorded	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	-4.7%
Total	76.0	78.1	80.2	81.6	82.2	69.7	82.0	83.1	82.0	80.3	78.1	-6.1%

The number of Subclass 457 primary visa holders in Australia peaked at the end of February 2009 at 83 100. By 31 May 2009, the number had fallen by 6.1 per cent. The industries most affected by the fall in numbers were:

- Other Services (-9.7 per cent)
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (-9.3 per cent)
- Arts and Recreation Services (-9.1 per cent)
- Financial and Insurance Services (-9.0 per cent)
- Construction (-7.8 per cent)
- Mining (-7.5 per cent)
- Manufacturing (-7.4 per cent)
- Information Media and Telecommunications (-7.2 per cent)

(2) In raw number terms, the number of Subclass 457 primary visa holders in Australia falls in December each year as visa holders travel overseas in the Christmas/New Year Holiday period. This also happens in the Easter holiday period, but to a lesser extent.

When looking at the long-term trend since Subclass 457 was introduced in 1996, the downturn in 457 numbers seen since February 2009 is unusual but expected as it is in line with the overall economic conditions. There has never been a downward trend in any previous period.

(3) Yes.