

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 23 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0128) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

What is the number of Labour Agreement submissions pending a decision before the Department, and more importantly, the exact timeframe they have been in the pipeline?

Answer:

As at 31 May 2011, there were 73 Labour Agreement submissions pending a decision before the Department. As at 31 May 2011, the median timeframe these requests had been before the Department was 180 calendar days.

It is important to note that Labour Agreements provide an option for employers to negotiate concessions to standard visa arrangements where these are not appropriate. Negotiations to finalise an agreement can be protracted as the Department seeks to ensure that any concessions granted do not undermine the rights of overseas workers and employment opportunities for Australians. The timeframe to assess a Labour Agreement is dependant on the employer providing all information required to make a decision. The extended timeframe is in many cases, the result of an employer providing incomplete information.