

**QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(BE11/0138) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration**

Senator Cash asked:

How does the Department respond to criticism that the threshold for EMAs discriminates against smaller projects which essentially have the same sort of need for both skilled and unskilled workers in relation to their projects?

*Answer:*

The EMA program is a targeted program focussing on the unique needs of 'mega' resource projects. The EMA eligibility criteria restrict the program to the most significant resource projects in Australia. This is appropriate as these projects will have a proportionately more significant impact on the Australian labour market. Smaller resource projects are still able to access all of the currently available migration programs and to priority processing for 457 visa holders.