

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011**

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

**(BE11/0143) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration**

Senator Cash (L&CA 14) asked:

Has the department considered collapsing the Subclass 456 Visa and extending the 457 validity period from one day to four years in order to enact a sponsorship regime, including compliance for this Visa Subclass?

*Answer:*

Following the commencement of the *Migration Legislation Amendment (Worker Protection) Act 2008* on 14 September 2009, clients have been able to apply for work in Australia on the Subclass 457 Visa for a period of between one day and four years.

The Department has not considered combining the Subclass 456 and 457 Visas as they have different objectives.

The Subclass 457 Visa is designed to enable employers to sponsor overseas workers to fill key skill gaps in the Australian labour market and is subject to stringent sponsorship obligations.

The Subclass 456 Visa is designed to facilitate business travel for up to three months such as attending conferences, business negotiations or exploratory business visits. Work is generally only permitted where it is highly specialised and non-ongoing.