

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21-22 MAY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE12/0188) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

Labour agreements: I refer to the answer given to AE12/0206 which states, “of the 30 yet to be decided Labor Agreements mentioned in SE11/0168, 18 remain undecided. As at 21 January 2012, these 18 Labor Agreements had a median processing time of 314 days”.

Why is the reason behind the delays in processing the 18 Labor Agreements? Is this time frame considered to be acceptable by the Department? If so, why? If not, what is an acceptable time frame?

Answer:

Primarily, extended delays in the processing of labour agreements are caused by the business failing to substantiate the claims of, among other things, labour market need. In order for the Department to recommend that the Minister enter into a labour agreement with a business, the Department must be satisfied that the business has a need for the workers sought which could not be met from the local labour market, that any concessions can be justified, and that there have been relevant consultations.

The Department endeavours to process labour agreements within six months of receiving a complete application – a timeframe that is typically met.