

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21-22 MAY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE12/0222) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Boyce asked:

What work has the department done to date on working on the implementation of the Enabling Australia report? How many work hours has this work consumed? How much money has been spent on this work? At what stage is this work? Why two years after it was tabled has this report not been acted on except for two of its recommendations?

Answer:

In response to the recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, the department commenced a holistic review of the health requirement in 2010. The department has made a number of changes to processes, administration and policy and is investigating the feasibility of options. Notably the Department has implemented the Government's changes which:

- increase the Significant Cost Threshold from \$21 000 to \$35 000 on 1 July 2012;
- streamline the health waiver for humanitarian visa applicants; and
- make significant systems changes focused on improving the information available to applicants and raising transparency.

The response to the Committee will include detailed information about projects that have or will be undertaken in response to the Committee's report.

The Committee's recommendations are complex, with far reaching effects on clients, key stakeholders, other government portfolios as well as the States and Territories, and the Budget. As such, the Government's response and initial implementation of the Committee's recommendations have taken some time.

The Department has spent \$168 965.35 on this project since the report was published. This includes the cost of contracting experts. All other staffing expenses have been absorbed.