

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 30 October 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(133) Output 1.1 Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

1. Why have workers in the following ASCO Sub-Major Groups been granted 457 visas in the period 2001-2006:

- Road and rail transport drivers (over 40)
- Elementary clerks (over 20)
- Elementary service workers (over 30)
- Cleaners (Fewer than five)
- Factory labourers (50)
- Other labourers and related workers (over 170)?

2. Can you confirm that none of these occupations meets the requirements for a 457 visa, because they are essentially classed as “unskilled”?

3. Why were the rules (1) waived; or (2) ignored in each of these cases?

Answer:

1, 2 & 3. Employers seeking to recruit skilled workers on Subclass 457 visas can nominate positions that generally correspond to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) major groups 1-4. These major groups cover managers and administrators, professionals, associate professionals, and skilled tradespeople.

Special arrangements for regional Australia were introduced on 1 July 2002. These arrangements allow regional employers to sponsor skilled workers in semi-skilled occupations where they obtain certification from a Regional Certifying Body that the position cannot reasonably be filled locally.

Labour agreements may also be negotiated in instances where an occupation is not on the list of approved occupations for Subclass 457 visas but a shortage can be established.

In some cases, Subclass 457 visas were granted for positions in the ASCO sub-major groups listed above because the positions were nominated before 1 July 2001 and the positions met the requirements for labour market testing.