

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(3) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration – Office of the MARA

Senator Fierravanti-Wells (L&C 20) asked:

(1) Perhaps you could go back over recent developments and take, say, the last five or six years. I am interested in seeing the average length of time that people stay as agents. I think one of the problems in the industry has been that, although there are very good agents and some who have been in the profession for years and years, we have seen the fly-by-nighters. It would be interesting to see some statistics in relation to those that come and go and the length of time that people have been agents—perhaps a profile of migration agents. I think you understand what I am asking for?

(2) During the hearing, you provided statistics on the average length of time people remain migration agents and some additional information will be provided on notice. Could you amplify in your response any information about the relatively short time that people remain migration agents including factors such as income levels, competition, age, experience, complexity of the area, reasons why people leave the profession, etc.

Answer:

(1) Sixty one percent of agents have been registered migration agents (RMA) for less than five years. Between six and ten years it is twenty five percent and over ten years it is fourteen percent. The average length of time people stay as a RMA is approximately five years.

The table below provides more detail on the years of service as registered migration agents at 09 October 2009.

Years	Agents	Percentage
0	863	20.6%
1	477	11.4%
2	481	11.5%
3	299	7.2%
4	194	4.7%
5	230	5.5%
6	300	7.2%
7	231	5.5%
8	201	4.8%
9	175	4.2%
10	139	3.3%
11	85	2.0%

12	132	3.2%
13	70	1.7%
14	58	1.4%
15	71	1.7%
16	175	4.2%

(2) Profile of registered migration agents (RMA's):

- 79% of agents work in their own business as sole operators and/or in a business which only employs one migration agent;
- 30% of agents work in a business employing 2-5 agents;
- 11% of agents work in a business employing 6 or more agent;
- 22% of RMAs work in more than one business;
- Approximately 43% are female and 58% are male;
- The average age of a registered migration agent is 43.8 years; and
- 1114 of the 4182 (26.6%) registered migration agents hold a legal practising certificate.

The 2007-08 Review of Statutory Self- Regulation of the Migration Advice Profession noted that the current entry requirement, the Graduate Certificate, is not a sufficiently robust knowledge requirement for an increasingly complex area and could attribute to the high attrition rate amongst new migration agents. However, this explanation was based on anecdotal evidence.

To date no research has been undertaken to assess the income levels or reasons why people leave the migration advice profession.