

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(73) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

1. Have the tenders for the 2nd year of the scheme been completed? If so what are those details?
2. What was the full cost to the Government for the first season of this program?
3. What countries are involved in the program?
4. What has been the trade union involvement in this program?
5. When will the next batch arrive?

Answer:

1. A selection process for employers to participate in Phase Two of the Pilot has been completed.

Expressions of interest from labour hire companies interested in participating in Phase Two of the Pilot as employers of Pacific seasonal workers were called for on 17 July 2009 and closed on 6 August 2009.

Fourteen responses were received and assessed. Four respondents were invited to participate as employers in Phase Two of the Pilot based on the results of an assessment against published selection criteria, financial viability assessments and workplace relations, immigration and OHS compliance reviews.

2. The full cost of the Pilot to the Government for Financial Year 2008-09 is \$3,786,926
3. The countries involved in the Pilot are:
 - the Republic of Kiribati,
 - the Independent State of Papua New Guinea,
 - the Kingdom of Tonga, and
 - the Republic of Vanuatu

On 24 November 2008, The Australian Government has entered into Memoranda of Understanding with the Governments of the Republic of Kiribati, the Kingdom of Tonga, and the Republic of Vanuatu that establish the arrangements that underpin the Pilot.

It is expected that Papua New Guinea will enter into a MoU with the Australian Government in the near future.

4. The Australian Workers' Union is a member of the National Stakeholder Consultative Panel, which was established in December 2008 and provides a forum for discussion of national issues relevant to the Pilot.

Two of the labour hire companies selected to employ Pacific seasonal workers during Phase One of the Pilot, Summit Personnel and All Recruiting Services, elected to enter into an industrial instrument with the Australian Workers' Union for the pay and conditions of Pacific seasonal workers.

5. The timing of the next recruitment of Pacific seasonal workers will be determined by the labour hire companies selected for Phase Two of the Pilot and growers' demand for labour.