

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(141) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

Did DIAC create dedicated specialist teams on an industry/sector basis to process applications? If so, what outcomes have been achieved to date?

Answer:

Yes.

Since the establishment of the 457 Centres of Excellence (CoE) in July 2008, a variety of approaches has been implemented to ensure that key sectors with labour shortages are well served in a timely manner. This has included the establishment of teams focussed on particular sectors. For example, the Victorian 457 CoE has a team dedicated to processing applications from the health sector, particularly in recognition of the fact that in Victoria, because of deregulation, each metropolitan hospital network has its own sponsorship agreement. NSW and WA CoEs achieve similar timely outcomes through their allocation process. All CoEs have dedicated team leaders with the role of developing strong working relationships with key stakeholders (such as various hospitals and health centre units).

The key to timeliness of processing is that applications are complete and decision-ready at time of lodgement. In order to assist with this, all CoEs regularly meet with stakeholders groups including the Migration Institute of Australia, the Migration Alliance, various state health bodies, the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority (AHPRA) and others. DIAC also utiliseS the Outreach Officer network to engage with their members - for example Consult Australia and the Australian Council for Minerals and Energy. Regional Outreach Officers assist small regional employers in understanding subclass 457 visa requirements and guide them to the most appropriate visa types, reducing unnecessary applications.