

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(170) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

- (1) Is the Department / Minister aware of complaints regarding the inefficiency of processing Labour Agreements?
- (2) If so please provide particulars.

Answer:

(1)-(2) Yes, the Department / Minister are aware of complaints regarding the timeframe taken to negotiate Labour Agreements in certain cases.

Labour Agreements provide an option for employers to negotiate concessions to standard visa arrangements where these are not appropriate for their needs. As such, a request for a Labour Agreement is not an application and there is no set list of requirements which an employer must meet. Each individual case is decided on the basis of negotiations between the employer or industry and the Department.

The assessment process for Labour Agreement requests is a rigorous one to ensure that decisions are made in line with policy intentions and parameters. The assessment of submissions has been delayed in some instances because the initial information provided was incomplete, leading to requests for further details.

Nonetheless, the Department accepts the need for improvement and has implemented a new decision-making framework which will streamline assessment and result in greater efficiencies and shorter processing times for Labour Agreement requests.