

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(183) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration**

Senator Cash asked:

What consideration is being given to ensure that only Registered Migration Agents can legally give advice about migration to Australia?

*Answer:*

Migration agents who operate in Australia must be registered with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA) in order to provide immigration assistance. It is not, however, a requirement under Australian legislation for those migration agents outside of Australia to be registered.

The Department is examining ways to better monitor the activities of offshore agents in the provision of immigration assistance and to enhance the protection that is available to consumers. A number of factors have to be balanced, including:

- any system implemented provides clients with effective consumer protection;
- ensuring clients retain access to departmental services; and
- the ongoing costs of establishing and maintaining an overseas 'registration' system as well as costs associated with the monitoring of those agents.