

## **QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010**

#### **IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO**

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

Senator Cash asked:

What is the public policy reason behind not exempting current overseas students in Australia from the changes to the General Skilled Migration program when many of them would have chosen to study in Australia because it offered a publicised and perfectly legitimate pathway to Permanent Residence? Is this considered fair?

Answer:

Student visas are granted to allow people to come to Australia on a temporary basis for a specified period to undertake study at an Australian educational institution.

The Government has never made a guarantee of migration just because someone holds a student visa.

Even so, the changes announced on 8 February 2010 include generous transitional arrangements for those who were current or former student visa holders at the time the changes were announced on 8 February 2010.

These arrangements provide students with both the time and the opportunity to explore their options before making a decision on their future. Options for further visas remain, but there can be no guarantee of permanent residence.

Those who are able to demonstrate that they can meet Australia's skills needs, as articulated in the requirements for a permanent skilled visa, will still have the opportunity to achieve permanent residence.

The success of any future applicant will depend on whether they meet the requirements for a visa that exist at the time they make the application.

The transitional arrangements apply until the end of 2012.