

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 17 OCTOBER 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(SE11/0170) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

What is the longest time taken to finalise a Labour Agreement over the last twelve months?

Answer:

Of the labour agreements finalised between 1 November 2010 and 31 October 2011, the longest negotiation timeframe was 35 months.

The median negotiation time over this period was eight months. The particularly lengthy negotiation time of the above case is not typical: it was due to a combination of processing and policy issues, initial stakeholder objections, consultations with other agencies, and the time taken by the client to provide all requisite information.

There are only 13 cases which have been on hand for more than a year. Of the total 77 negotiations currently underway, the amount of time they have been on hand is as follows:

less than 3 months	between 3 and 6 months	between 6 and 12 months	more than 12 months
23	26	15	13

The older cases are typically from employers in the Accommodation and Food, Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry, and Mining, Manufacturing and Construction industries, seeking substantial concessions. Where substantial concessions are sought, negotiations often take longer due to the amount of evidence required and integrity measures that must be built in to the Labour Agreement.

While the majority of Labour Agreement negotiations progress in a timely manner, those cases which have been on hand for a long time are usually the result of the client not providing information requested by the Department. Additional information is requested to ensure that a fully informed assessment of the employer's business case is conducted. This is to confirm that there is a genuine need for overseas workers and that a labour agreement would not undermine employment and training opportunities for Australians.