

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

**Outcome: Higher Education Research and International**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000916**

Senator Collins, Jacinta provided in writing.

***International student visa issues - visa processing***

**Question**

What advice did the Department of Education and Training receive from the Department of Immigration about delays in student visa processing under the streamlined visa processing, in 2016?

What role did the Department have in communicating issues about delays in visa processing to sector in 2016?

Did the Department formally raise concerns in writing with the Department of Immigration about delays in visa processing for students?

Did the Minister or the Department write to the sector about this issue in 2015 or 2016?

**Answer**

The Department of Education and Training received advice from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) on strategies being implemented to address the visa delays and reduce the backlog of visa applications, including:

- prioritising applications by students' course start dates
- increased resourcing, including redistribution of staff from other visa programmes to assist with processing student visas
- refining internal risk frameworks and systems to better reflect risk and therefore reduce the time and effort expended on particular cases.

The department consulted with industry peak bodies such as Universities Australia to gauge the impact of the delays and advised DIBP on strategies for consulting with the international education sector.

Minister Birmingham wrote in response to concerns about visa processing delays to Group of Eight Australia, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong and Senator the Hon Kim Carr.