

HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

Inquiry into the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment
(Quality and Integrity) Bill 2024

06 September 2024

QoN Number: 9

Subject: Number of student visa applications by month

Asked by: Senator Henderson

Question:

Senator HENDERSON: Could you also please provide the number of student visa applications received by month for the calendar years 2023 and 2024?

Mr Kilner: Yes.

Answer:

Student visa lodgments per month

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2023	55,521	57,296	57,268	39,436	58,550	75,130	49,210	47,696	41,715	38,596	47,771	57,324
2024	55,322	43,281	51,896	30,163	48,157	69,062	32,124	36,681				

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

06 September 2024

QoN Number: 10

Subject: Student visa appeal data

Asked by: Sarah Henderson

Question:

Senator HENDERSON: Thank you. Could you please advise how many student visa appeals are currently the subject of an appeal in a tribunal or court, including the breakdown of this number by category of student visa dispute, that is, an appeal against a student visa refusal or cancellation, for instance: for failure to commence a course, course non-attendance, not having the required finance, not being enrolled in a course, breach of work conditions and the like? Do you have any of that data available now?

Mr Kilner: No, we don't.

Senator HENDERSON: Could you please provide that, including the number of students involved in more than one case, for example, whether they've got a student visa appeal underway as well as a protection visa application?

Mr Kilner: Yes, we will provide that on notice.

Answer:

Data on appeals against a decision to refuse a student visa application or cancel a student visa is a matter for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

The requested data is held by the Department of Home Affairs but cannot be extracted due to the need to develop new computer code or script; or the Department would need to manually intervene to identify, interrogate and extract the data.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

06 September 2024

QoN Number: 11

Subject: Student visa cases subject to a protection visa application

Asked by: Sarah Henderson

Question:

Senator HENDERSON: Separately, can you provide the number of student visa cases that are the subject of a protection visa application?

Answer:

As at 31 August 2024, there were 7,282 individuals with a Protection visa (subclass 866) application pending before the Department where the last substantive visa granted was a Student visa ^.

^ The reference to Student visa includes all the Student subclasses.

** The above information is provided by the Department of Home Affairs and was extracted from departmental systems on 1 September 2024. As data has been drawn from a dynamic system environment, the information is correct at the time of extraction and figures may differ slightly from previous or future reporting.*

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

06 September 2024

QoN Number: 12

Subject: Upgrades to Home Affairs' IT systems

Asked by: Sarah Henderson

Question:

Senator HENDERSON: Separately, can you provide the number of student visa cases that are the subject of a protection visa application? And, very quickly, can you please describe the upgrades to your systems that will be required as a result of the student caps? How long will that build take, and what are the system changes required?

Mr Kilner: Do you want me to go into detail on that now?

Senator HENDERSON: A quick snapshot would be terrific, and you can provide any more detail on notice.

Answer:

The National Planning Level (NPL) will limit new overseas student “commencements”. Any changes to the Department of Education’s Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) are a matter for the Department of Education.

System changes will be required to make anticipated complimentary changes to the introduction of the NPL, including to support any changes to Ministerial Direction 107. This will include changes to the Department’s Workflow Management system to ensure appropriate handling of the visa application caseload.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

06 September 2024

QoN Number: 13

Subject: Student visa exemptions

Asked by: Sarah Henderson

Question:

Senator HENDERSON: How many students will be exempt under the proposed bill before the parliament?

Mr Kilner: I'm not sure—

Senator HENDERSON: There are a number of exemption categories under the bill: government scholarships, the twinning arrangements, school students. There's a range of exemptions. Could you please provide the number of foreign students that you anticipate will be exempt from the international student caps?

Ms Cavanagh: Because those categories are exempt, there is no limit. There's no—

Senator HENDERSON: I understand that, but what is the anticipated number of visas which will be issued in those exempt categories?

Mr Kilner: We'll have to take that on notice.

Senator HENDERSON: Is it 20,000, 40,000, 50,000, 100,000? Have you done any internal work in relation to how many students will fall into the exempt categories?

Ms Cavanagh: Those categories will continue to be demand driven. Someone's ability to apply for a student visa will continue to depend on their obtaining a confirmation of enrolment.

Senator HENDERSON: I realise that, but in terms of your work at the Department of Home Affairs, what is the anticipated number of students who will be eligible for a student visa who will fall into an exempt category? You roughly know how many school students, for instance. How many students, in total, and can you provide the anticipated breakdown by category for 2025?

Ms Cavanagh: What we could do is take a previous year as an example and come back to you on notice with the numbers in those categories.

Senator HENDERSON: Could you provide the data for this year, for instance?

Mr Kilner: Certainly. For example, for the school sector last program year we received 12,528 applications. So far—and I'm talking July and August of this year—we've received 1,102, which is a consistent number for last year. The overall number is a subset of the total visa grants and our capacity for processing is relatively small. It's not a—

Senator HENDERSON: What I'm asking—my apologies for cutting in. School students is a designated category but under your systems—student visas issued by way of a twinning arrangement, for instance, is not a designated category, along with foreign government scholarships. What numbers are you anticipating will fall into the exempt category in those categories?

Ms Cavanagh: We'll take that on notice.

Answer:

Visas granted for 2023-24, by sector, not included in the proposed National Planning Limits were:

Visa Type	2023-24
Foreign Affairs or Defence Sector	4,628
Independent ELICOS Sector	39,020
Non-Award Sector	17,663
Postgraduate Research Sector	12,796
Schools Sector	9,778
Grand Total	83,885

Final definitions of exemptions for twinning arrangements, specific foreign government scholarships and the scope for exemption for the Pacific are being developed.