Questions taken on notice

Social Inclusion Programs

Senator BILYK

Question:

Are there any community grant programs available to training providers to encourage inclusion?

Answer:

The central strategy of the Diverse Australia Program is to respond to issues of racism and intolerance and promote opportunities for people to participate in Australian life.

The Program provides funds for not-for-profit organisations to develop their own projects that encourage inclusion and mutual respect. Incorporated not for profit training providers are able to apply for Diverse Australia Program funding.

Student Visa Application Charge

Senator BILYK

Question:

What services are covered by the Student Visa Application Charge?

Answer:

The levels of Visa Application Charges (VACs) are determined by Government and take into account a number of factors, including the cost of immigration border control and compliance activities. Consistent with the user pays principle, the Government has determined that these costs should be a largely borne by the users of these services and not be borne by the Australian taxpayer at large.

During the 2009-10 budget process, DIAC in conjunction with the Expenditure Review Taskforce exercise run by the Department of Finance and Deregulation reviewed all VACs. After considering the information gathered in the review, including information on the relative level of visa fees in other countries, various options were put to the Government for consideration in the 2009-10 Federal Budget. The Government decided to increase a range of VACs at a rate higher than the normal CPI adjustment to reflect the increase in border control and migration activities costs over recent years. The Student VAC increased from $450 to $540.

Statistics – Application Lodgement

Senator BACK

Question:

Senator Back indicated he would like to see annual student visa lodgement data relating to the Indian student caseload.

Answer:

Visa lodgement data from the top five countries in the student visa caseload.

Student visa applications (onshore and offshore)

Citizenship	2008-09	2008-09 to 31 August	2009-10 to 31 August	Comparison 2009-10 vs 2008-09
India	79,493	17,134	12,449	-38%
China, Peoples Republic of	61,509	9,896	11,795	16%
Korea, Republic of	18,115	2,752	2,574	-7%
Thailand	14,101	2,304	2,298	-0.3%
Vietnam	11,282	1,694	2,032	17%
Global Total	362,418	62,094	56,425	-10%