



Appendix A: Written Questions to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship

General

Question 1:

The Migration (Visa Evidence) Charge Bill 2012 imposes a visa evidence charge. What is the current process for the issuing of hardcopy visa evidence and what is the nature of the evidence provided on request?

Question 2:

Visa labels are not required by Australia. Instead the Department has an online visa validation service, Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO). Please describe the system, its functions and the current rate of access by visa holders and third parties.

Question 3:

The bills are introduced as part of the transfer to a user pays model. Please provide more information about the objectives of Visa Pricing Transformation in the context of DIAC's broader Transformation Program, and the shift to label free travel mentioned in the Explanatory Memoranda.

Visa evidence requests

Question 4:

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Mr Chris Bowen MP has noted that, during 2011, 1.3 million visa labels were requested, 455 000 being made onshore (Second Reading Speech, *House Hansard*, 9 May 2012). Given Australia has VEVO and that hard copy visa evidence is not required by law, why are the number of onshore requests for visa labels so high?

Question 5:

Over 900 000 requests were made offshore. What types of institutions or organisations in Australia and overseas might request require hard copy visa evidence and for what purpose? Would schools or educational institutions require such evidence?

Question 6:

The Minister also noted in his second reading speech that business process based initiatives have not been successful in encouraging more clients to use the online visa validation system. Please detail the measures tried and the target audiences.

Question 7:

Has the Department conducted an impact assessment in Australia and overseas to identify and address potential barriers to participation for particular sectors, such as education, under the shift to online visa validation?

Question 8:

What consultation with external stakeholders was conducted in the course of preparing these bills? What concerns were raised and how were these addressed in the legislation?

Costs and revenue projections

Question 9:

The Explanatory Memoranda for these bills state that their financial impact will be high, with revenue in the order of \$90 million to be generated over three years. Please explain the economic modelling used to arrive at this revenue forecast. Is cost recovery a major driver for introduction of the new charge?

Question 10:

The Migration (Visa Evidence) Charge Bill 2012 provides for a maximum charge of \$250 for a visa label. What factors were taken into account when determining this upper limit and how was it calculated?

Question 11:

The Migration (Visa Evidence) Charge (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2012 provides for regulations to set different charges for different circumstances and classes of visa, and for a method of calculation to be developed for this. Please describe the calculation method and/or the costing methodology for the different charges.

Question 12:

Can the Department provide an indication of the range of charges for different categories of visas: for example, for skilled long and short stay visas?

Question 13:

Which classes of visa will be exempted and which will attract nil fees? Under what circumstances may particular fees be reduced?