

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Outcome 2 - Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004069

Senator Cameron asked on 29 May 2017 on proof Hansard page 128

Question

Seasonal Work Programme - Health insurance for deceased participant

Senator CAMERON: 24 hours. Was Mr Fifita covered by health insurance?

Ms Durbin: Yes, he was.

Senator CAMERON: Have you sighted the health insurance?

Ms Durbin: I have not personally, but I know the approved employer has had dealings with the health insurance provider.

Senator CAMERON: But having dealings with them does not mean to say that there was—

Ms Parker: Around the—

Senator CAMERON: Have you sighted health insurance that covered Mr Fifita?

Ms Durbin: I have not, no.

Senator CAMERON: Has anyone in the department?

Ms Durbin: I will take that on notice and check with my staff member who attended whether we have had any subsequent documentation.

Senator CAMERON: You say that he was covered. How did you determine that he was covered if you have not sighted any documents?

Ms Durbin: From the discussions that we have had with the approved employer, from the discussions that we have had with the family members and from the discussions that I have had with my staff members.

Senator CAMERON: How would the family members know?

Ms Durbin: They would be in discussions with the approved employer.

Senator CAMERON: Have you checked with the approved employer if there was coverage?

Ms Durbin: Yes.

Senator CAMERON: You have?

Ms Durbin: I have not sighted the documentation, but every discussion, every indication, that we have had has confirmed that, yes, there was health insurance in place.

Senator CAMERON: But, if you have not seen it, how do you know?

Ms Durbin: I am saying I personally have not sighted it.

Senator CAMERON: But has someone in the department—

Ms Parker: We are taking it on notice, Senator.

Ms Durbin: We are taking it on notice.

Ms Parker: We will check.

Ms Leon: We will check with the staff of the department who went up to Childers after this event.

Senator CAMERON: They sighted it, did they?

Ms Parker: We do not know.

Ms Leon: No. The reason Ms Durbin is taking it on notice is that she personally did not go to Childers, but her

Answer

When applying for a Temporary Work (International Relations) visa (subclass 403), evidence of adequate arrangements for health insurance during the period of the applicant's intended stay must be provided to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection before a visa can be granted.

The official from the Department of Employment did not sight health insurance documentation when visiting the approved employer on this particular occasion as the employer had previously confirmed that health insurance coverage was in place and had provided the policy number and contact details of an account manager for the health insurance fund. Health insurance documentation has since been sighted by Department of Employment on 31 May 2017. The Department has subsequently confirmed that cover was in place for the full period of the individual's intended stay, and is satisfied that the employer has complied with its obligations in this regard.