

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/066) - Working holiday visa applications lodged in 2015 calendar year - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Bilyk, Catryna (L&CA 105) asked:

Senator BILYK: What about working holiday-makers and the impact of backpacker tax? Is that your area too?

Mr Wilden: Yes.

Senator BILYK: Great. There were some questions that related to that published on 30 June 2015. How many working holiday visa applications were lodged in the 2015 calendar year?

Mr Wilden: My program management friends may be able to help with the lodgement numbers.

Mr Williams: Lodged in the 2015-16 calendar years?

Senator BILYK: The 2015 calendar year.

Mr Williams: I do not have it by calendar years. I have 2014-15, which is the last full year.

Senator BILYK: Okay.

Mr Williams: There were 122,410 applications lodged across the two categories that make up—

Senator BILYK: 122,410. Would you have the 2013-14 year?

Mr Williams: I do not have those with me, no.

Senator BILYK: Perhaps you could take that on notice. Is that the last update that you gave me—2014-15?

Mr Williams: I am looking at the figures again. I notice that there are too many to show a comparison between the two halves of the year. That is only half of the year's numbers. I will need to take that on notice unless I can find them in another table. The figures I gave you were for the half-year from 1 July to 31 December 2014. The table I have was showing a comparison—

Senator BILYK: Sorry, July to December?

Mr Williams: That is right. That would be only half of the potential grants for that year.

Senator BILYK: In 2014?

Mr Williams: That is right.

Senator BILYK: You can take it on notice. Perhaps we could get it for the calendar years of 2015, 2014 and 2013, if you are going to take it on notice. Are you able to tell me: has the rate of application changed since 12 May 2015 until now, compared to the same period in the prior year?

Ms Dacey: Since 12 May specifically?

Mr Williams: For 12 May 2015—I cannot. I would need to take that on notice.

Senator BILYK: Have applications increased or decreased, and by what quantity and percentage? If you did not know that last answer, I am presuming you will have to take that one on notice too.

Mr Williams: There is a little bit of variation. They decreased a little bit in the 417 category, which is the working holiday visa, the traditional one. They have increased quite significantly in the work and holiday scheme because a number of new countries have been added to the scheme.

Senator BILYK: Can you give me some figures on notice?

Mr Williams: Will do.

Answer:

The Working Holiday Maker (WHM) programme is made up of the Working Holiday visa (subclass 417), including both first and second Working Holiday visas, and the Work and Holiday visa (subclass 462).

The number of WHM applications lodged by calendar year is provided in the following table:

Calendar year	2013	2014	2015
WHM lodgement numbers	255,048	230,495	228,787

In the 2013–14 programme year, 242,050 applications for WHM were lodged.

The number of WHM applications lodged from 12 May 2015 to 8 February 2016 was 173,432. This compares to 177,780 applications lodged in the same period of the previous year, which represents a 2.4 per cent decrease.