

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/067) - Working holiday visa applications - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Bilyk, Catryna (L&CA 105/106) asked:

Senator BILYK: Thank you. The July 2015 DIPB report shows working holiday visa applications fell by over 10,000 last year. Any idea why that might have been?

Mr Williams: That is right. That is in a traditional working holiday area. Our view on that would probably be that it is because it is a little bit sensitive to the global economy. If the Australian economy is doing better than economies overseas, for people coming on a holiday this is quite an attractive visa because they can hedge their costs a little bit by knowing that they can work in Australia.

Senator BILYK: Except that applications fell.

Mr Williams: That is right—when the global economy improved after the global crisis. This is our analysis of it, but we probably need to go into it in more detail. Our thinking is that, as the global economy improved, the category became possibly less attractive to people from countries where their economy was in better shape than it had been.

Senator BILYK: Do you want to take that on notice in case there is anything else to go there?

Mr Williams: Yes.

Answer:

The current decline in application volumes for the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) programme follows an unprecedented period of growth over most of the previous decade, peaking in 2012–13. This growth was in part driven by the Global Financial Crisis as Australia's economy was less affected than other countries.

The international tourism market is highly complex and competitive, with many factors potentially influencing demand for different destinations. Fluctuating economic and labour market conditions both in Australia and in our partner countries and a falling Australian dollar are factors that may play a role in influencing demand for WHM visas.