

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/164) - Student Visas - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA) written:

You have confirmed that, in 2014-15, the number of student visas cancelled was 10,949 (SE15/110). That was up from about 8,000 the previous year. What are the reasons for this sizeable increase of around 36%? Have you done an analysis of this?

This increase is not matched by a commensurate increase in visas granted – in fact visa numbers have dropped. Why have visas granted dropped from over 300,000 in 2014 to fewer than 250,000 in 2015 to October?

What are the reasons behind the sudden growth in visas refused in 2-14-15 over the previous financial year?

Answer:

The significant increase in student visa cancellations between the comparative reporting periods can primarily be attributed to the Department's introduction in early 2015 of a revised process for identifying long-term, offshore students using automated batch processing. Being a more efficient process, batch processing has resulted in the Department cancelling a higher number of visas per month, for students who are no longer residing in Australia.

The suggested drop in visa grant figures is due to comparing 12 month data (January to December 2014) with 10 month data (January to October 2015). Information on visa grant figures can be viewed in the following table:

Total student visa (subclass 570-576) grants

Year	January - October	January - December
2014	253,868	302,576
2015	249,630	297,598

Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2016 (BE9310.01)

Any growth in visa refusal figures reflects an increase in the number of applications where the legislative criteria for the grant of a student visa have not been met.