

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 27 February 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/093) - Visa application costs - Programme 2.3: Visas

Senator Di Natale, Richard (L&CA) written:

9. Can you provide details of all increases in application costs for Australian visas during the past 12 months, the nature of any consultation about those price increases, the length of any notification period, and the justification for those price increases?

Answer:

Over the past twelve months to 27 February 2017, the only visa to have a Visa Application Charge (VAC) increase was the Temporary Work (Short Stay Specialist) visa (subclass 400). This increase was from \$175 to \$275 and occurred on 19 November 2016 as part of changes made to the Temporary Activity visa framework. Also as a result of these changes, the VAC associated to superyacht crew increased from \$0 to \$275.

The introduction of the new Temporary Activity visa framework included a uniform and flat pricing structure of \$275 for all Temporary Activity visas, delivering a greater level of equity into the pricing structure for these visas. This resulted in the VAC reducing from \$380 to \$275 for the following visa subclasses that were replaced through this change:

- Subclass 401 Temporary Work (Long Stay Activity) visa
- Subclass 402 Training and Research visa
- Subclass 403 Temporary Work (International Relations) visa
- Subclass 416 Special Program visa
- Subclass 420 Temporary Work (Entertainment) visa

In addition, the sponsor nomination requirement and the associated \$170 fee was removed from a number of activities such as entertainment and research.

Significant consultation was undertaken with stakeholders during 2014-15 in relation to changes made to the Temporary Activity visa framework, including through a discussion paper, proposal paper and a survey.

Further information relating to VAC increases was made available on the Department's website in September 2016 and was subsequently discussed in a series of public information sessions in Australian capital cities, held on 23 to 30 September 2016 on the changes to the Temporary Activity visa framework.