

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/108) PROGRAMME – 1.2: Visa and Citizenship

Senator Seselja (L&CA 81) asked:

Senator SESELJA: I want to ask some questions around 457 visas. What are the latest statistics on the median processing time for a subclass 457 visa?

Mr Vardos: While Mr Williams is looking for further detail, I can say that the processing-time service standard for the 457 is 75 per cent of applications finalised within three months for high-risk applications and within two months for low-risk applications. For comparison purposes, for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 April 2014, 75.9 per cent of subclass 457s were finalised within the service standard. If you want more detail than that, we might have to take it on notice. But for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013—no, sorry, that is too old.

Senator SESELJA: No, I would be interested in the comparison.

Answer:

For the period 1 July 2013 to 31 May 2014, the median processing time for a subclass 457 visa was 33 days.

For the period 1 July 2013 to 31 May 2013 the median processing time for a subclass 457 visa was 16 days.

The increase in the median processing time between 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 and 1 July 2013 to 31 May 2014 was due an increase in subclass 457 visa applications lodged in the last quarter of the 2012/13 programme year.

The lodgement increase followed an announcement in February 2013 of reforms to the subclass 457 programme which included the application charge increasing from \$85 to \$330 from 1 July 2013.

This lodgement surge led to processing times increasing significantly which peaked at 63 days in September 2013. There has been an improving trend since that time.