

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE17/106) - Applicants to enter the country with multiple wives - Programme 2.2: Migration

Senator Roberts, Malcolm (L&CA 57 & 58) asked:

Senator ROBERTS: I am a servant to all the people of Queensland. However, I tend to listen much more easily to people who are strong supporters of ours because they are talking to us all the time. They have a moral compass and a strong work ethic so that drives this next question. How many Muslims who have multiple wives have been applying to immigrate to Australia in the last decade?

Mr Pezzullo: I would need to take on notice that question. I am not sure how many Muslims because of the earlier answers I have given you. But how many people who have got more than one wife?

Senator ROBERTS: Perhaps the number of Muslims with more than one wife and the number of non-Muslims with more than one wife.

Senator PRATT: It is not the only religion that has multiple spouses.

Senator ROBERTS: That is correct, but we would like to know that.

Mr Pezzullo: We will take that on notice.

Answer:

A person's religion is not a factor in the consideration of their eligibility for a permanent residence visa under Australia's Migration Programme. This reflects the non-discriminatory nature of Australia's migration and humanitarian programmes historically.

In this context, Migration Programme applicants are not required to declare their religion as part of the application process.

The Australian Government does not recognise polygamous marriages, either for migration purposes under the *Migration Act 1958* or under the *Marriage Act 1961*. Where a visa holder is found to be in a polygamous marriage and has not declared multiple relationships on the visa application this could be considered grounds for cancellation of the visa under section 109 of the *Migration Act 1958*, due to incorrect information in a visa application.

Furthermore, sponsorship limitations exist within the Migration Regulations 1994 to limit the number of Partner category (Partner and Prospective marriage visa) applicants that a person can sponsor. The provisions allow a person to sponsor a maximum of two visa applicants in total, provided the two sponsorships are at least five years apart. Similarly, a person who themselves were sponsored for a Partner category visa cannot sponsor a Partner category visa applicant until at least five years have passed since they applied for their Partner/Prospective Marriage visa.