

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 23 May 2017**

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

**(BE17/138) - Student visa holders switching to temporary skilled visas - Programme 2.3: Visas**

Senator Watt, Murray (L&CA 97) asked:

Senator WATT: Am I right in saying that it is common for people to come to Australia on a student visa and then change that to obtain a skilled visa to work here?

Mr Wilden: Normally, people come through the graduate visa. The pathway you may be referring to, whereby international students came and had a right, if you like, to pathways through, was closed off—and I will take on notice the exact date—around 2009-10. For someone who comes as an international student now there is no automatic pathway. They can move on to a graduate visa or they can go into a skill but they have to meet all the requirements of that skilled visa.

*Answer:*

Many international students make a decision to apply for permanent residence upon completing their studies. Applying for a skilled migration visa is a completely separate process and, there is no guarantee that, on the basis of having held a Student visa, a person will meet the requirements to be granted a skilled visa.

Former international students may also choose to apply for a Temporary Graduate (Subclass 485) visa which provides eligible graduates with the opportunity to gain practical work experience in Australia following their studies. These visa holders can then apply for a skilled migration visa subject to meeting the relevant eligibility criteria.

On 8 February 2010, the Government announced reforms to the General Skilled Migration programme, including a new points test which no longer awarded points on the basis of occupation. Points for certain occupations had the effect of distorting study choices of international students.

This change removed the incentive for some education providers to attract students, not for the quality of their education, but for the purpose of migration. The new migration model was designed to help deliver the skills the Australian economy needs. It still provided permanent visa options for Student visa holders, where they could fill labour market demands for their skills and meet the relevant eligibility criteria.