

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE14/433) PROGRAMME – 1.2: Visa and Citizenship

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

- (a) Are WHV visa grant numbers continuing to increase?
- (b) What is the projected number of WHV visa grants for the current FY 2014-15 based on current trends?
- (c) Please outline what work rights, if any, are attached to these visas.
- (d) How are work rights on these visas monitored by the Department?
- (e) What reporting requirements are there for employers?
- (f) What reporting requirements are there for visa holders?
- (g) What are the reporting requirements for educational institutions?
- (h) What is the compliance rate for each of the visas?
- (i) What compliance activities does the Department undertake?
- (j) Are there any plans to expand any of the existing arrangements?
If so, which ones?
- (k) Are there any plans to enter into WHM arrangements with other countries?
If so, which ones?

Answer:

(a) For the period 1 July 2014 to 30 November 2014, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection granted 98,842 Working Holiday (Subclass 417) visa applications and 4,969 Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visa applications. Compared to the same period of 1 July to 30 November in 2013, this represents a decrease of 12.0 per cent and an increase of 10.4 per cent respectively, and an overall decrease of 11.1 per cent for the combined Working Holiday Maker visa Programme.

(b) If the decrease of -11.1 per cent applied to the full year, the projection would be approximately 212,997 visas granted in 2014-15.

(c) Working Holiday Maker visa holders are able to work for the 12 month duration of their stay in Australia, but may not work for any one employer for longer than six months.

(d) The Department of Immigration and Border Protection actively investigates alleged breaches of visa conditions under the Working Holiday Maker visa programme, and other breaches of the Migration Act. All allegations of non-compliance are assessed and where warranted are referred to the relevant area of the Department for appropriate risk treatment.

(e) The Working Holiday Maker visa does not require employer sponsorship and there are no reporting requirements for Australian employers who choose to employ Working Holiday Maker visa holders, beyond compliance with standard Australian workplace laws and regulations.

Employers are however required to ensure that any foreign visa holders they employ are eligible to work. They may utilise the Department of Immigration and Border Protection's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) service to check details and entitlements of any visa holders they wish to employ, or are currently employing.

(f) There are no reporting requirements for Working Holiday Maker visa holders.

(g) Working Holiday Maker visa holders are permitted to undertake up to a total of four months study during their stay in Australia. There are no Working Holiday Maker specific reporting requirements for educational institutions.

(h) Compliance rates are very high, with a very low number and proportion of Working Holiday Maker visa holders overstaying their visas. There were 229,378 Working Holiday (Subclass 417) visas granted and 10,214 Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visas granted to participants in 2013-14. During the same 2013-14 period, 1,480 Working Holiday (Subclass 417) visa holders (0.6 per cent) and 80 Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visa holders (0.8 per cent) overstayed their visas.

(i) Compliance activities focus on prevention and deterrence in order to maximise compliance with visa conditions. Deliberate non-compliance is pursued through enforcement measures to deal with those people who do not comply with their visa conditions or who overstay the term of their visa.

Compliance activities are aimed at locating unlawful non-citizens and non-citizens working in breach of visa conditions. Such activities are prioritised according to risk with high risk clients including those with histories of repeated non-compliance. Compliance field activity is planned and executed in close consultation with law enforcement agencies where illegal activity may be involved.

(j) Announcements around the potential expansion of existing Working Holiday Maker visa arrangements are subject to agreement by both partner governments. Details around such expansions are not disclosed until mutual agreement has been reached by the respective governments.

(k) Australia is currently engaged in negotiations with a number of potential new Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visa arrangement partner countries. These countries include:

- Andorra
- Austria
- Brazil
- China
- Czech Republic
- Fiji
- Hungary
- India
- Latvia
- Mexico
- Mongolia
- Philippines
- San Marino
- Slovak Republic
- Solomon Islands
- Switzerland
- Vietnam