

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 19 October 2015

#### IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

#### **(SE15/053) - CHAFTA - Skill assessment - Programme 2.3: Visas**

Senator Xenophon, Nick (L&CA 124) asked:

Senator XENOPHON: That is where:

The Parties undertake to cooperate to streamline relevant skills assessment processes for temporary skilled labour visas, including through reducing the number of occupations currently subject to mandatory skills assessment for Chinese applicants for an Australian Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457).

And then it goes on to say:

Australia will remove the requirement for mandatory skills assessment for the following ten occupations on the date of entry into force of the Agreement.

I will not give the numbers, but it refers to automotive electrician, cabinetmaker, carpenter, carpenter and joiner, diesel motor mechanic, electrician (general), electrician (special class), joiner, motor mechanic (general) and motorcycle mechanic. This is what is being proposed under ChAFTA—correct?

Mr Wilden: Correct.

Senator XENOPHON: Is this any different from what occurred with other free trade agreements that we have entered into recently—in the last few years?

Mr Wilden: I would have to go back and check. Obviously, each agreement is unique in itself. Under those, there have been different arrangements. For example, under the Thailand free trade agreement, there was a condition to allow Thai chefs in, et cetera. In terms of the skills assessment elements, skills assessment may still be required. The only change that this has brought about is that, at the moment, China is one of several countries that have mandatory skills assessment before you put your nomination in. For these 10 occupations now, it is not mandatory. You can lodge your application. If we find that there is evidence to say you have the skills, you do not have to undertake a separate skills assessment. You still have to give all of the evidence of the skills you possess.

*Answer:*

The removal of the requirement for mandatory skills assessment, for certain occupations and countries, has not been requested or offered in any previous Free Trade Agreement (FTA). In respect to those countries Australia has recently concluded FTAs with (Malaysia, Korea, and Japan), nationals from these countries are not currently required to conduct mandatory skills assessments as part of the visa process.