

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 4 – Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No. EW0215_12

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

Regional Migration

The Government announced it will bring an extra 16 000 migrants to regional Australia to help address the skills and labour shortage. How do you determine which regions need them? How many are in farming regions, not those of mining and resources?

Levy on training businesses

When will the Government release its draft Government policy document leaked to the media, that proposes employers pay an additional \$5000 training requirement for each semi-skilled overseas worker, as reported in the media? (Source Courier Mail: <http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/foreign-hirings-to-fund-training-levy/story-e6freqmx-1226039371886>).

Can the minister confirm the \$5 000 would be on top of existing costs to fund training programs? Minister, did you not promise earlier this year there would be no new taxes or levies on business for training? (Source TAFE Directors Australia e-newsletter, under the heading 'National Custodian' needed for the apprenticeship system. Can the Minister say how much this new levy will raise (Note: reports say it could raise more than \$155 million)?

Answer

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has provided the following response:

Regional Migration

The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme allows approved employers in regional Australia to recruit skilled overseas workers to vacancies which cannot be met from the local labour market. This Scheme is employer and labour market driven and the distribution between regions, occupations and industries is not pre-determined.

Levy on training businesses

In May 2011 DIAC released information on Enterprise Migration Agreements, including training commitments for project owners and individual sub-contractors. Detailed information is available on the DIAC website at www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/research/_pdf/economic-social-civic-contributions-about-the-research2011.pdf. There is no reference to the \$5 000 training requirement for semi-skilled workers reported in the media.