

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 21 FEBRUARY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(44) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

If there are concerns, does the Government support a change in policy to redress these concerns?

Answer:

Since 2008, the Department has implemented a range of additional measures to bolster the overall integrity of the Student visa program. Increased integrity checking is designed to deter students who are non-genuine from applying for Student visas. Integrity measures include:

- Increased numbers of applicant interviews and enhanced document checking for high risk applicants from India, Nepal, Brazil, Zimbabwe and Mauritius;
- Auditing migration agents in the India and China Student visa markets;
- Removing migration agent access to the eVisa facility (where migration agents can lodge applications on behalf of students), if there is evidence demonstrating that these agents are regularly submitting low quality applications or applications found to contain fraudulent information; and
- Course packaging changes where applicants are assessed under the highest Assessment Level applicable to any of the courses in their package (with the exception of ELICOS courses).

Cleared by:

Paula Williams

Assistant Secretary, Education and Tourism Branch

17 March 2011