

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0223) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

The Department has specified that Regional Migration Agreements (RMAs) will target “high growth regional areas where local labour is in short supply”. What regional areas are to be targeted? What level of growth is required for an area to qualify? What type of growth is being used as a measure – wage expenditure, general labour market or total economic size?

Answer:

Regional Migration Agreements are targeted at regions where the following three principles can be evidenced:

- a downward trend in unemployment that is low by historical standards
- a high participation rate by historical standards
- demonstrated growth in employment over the previous 24 month period.

These principles are designed to target regions experiencing economic growth where demonstrable efforts are already being made to increase domestic labour supply.

In order to have optimal flexibility in the program, we are not proposing to set hard numerical benchmarks. Rather, these guiding principles will assist regions in determining whether a RMA is appropriate.

Regions will be identified either through self-selection, ensuring they meet the initial eligibility requirement of having a regional population under 150 000; or in consultation with the relevant state or territory government.