

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 13 FEBRUARY 2012

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE12/0279) Program 2.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

What would be the savings to the department if we moved to a higher percentage of electronic lodgements (of visas)?

Answer:

The immigration system is facing increasing security and integrity challenges as the volume of people crossing Australia's border increase and the risk profiles of these people change. The department is changing the way it operates to do more of its business online including increasing the percentage of visas lodged electronically. Quantifying savings is complex and difficult given the assumptions that would need to be made. The expectation is that any savings from reducing the amount of data entry work through elodgement will contribute to meeting departmental efficiency dividends as well as enabling some limited additional resources into managing high risk caseloads to meeting increasing integrity challenges. Electronic application data enables the development of more sophisticated risk profiles and ultimately identification of higher risk applications for more intensive assessment processes.