

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARINGS: 11 February 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(AE13/0121) PROGRAM – 5.1: Settlement Services for Migrants and Refugees

Senator Cash (L&CA 118) asked:

What sort of mechanisms are put in place for the government or the department to follow up and understand exactly why there has been a drop in AMEP registration rates?

Answer:

The AMEP registration rate, for the purposes of Annual Report reporting, is measured by the number of new arrivals who enrol in the AMEP, as a proportion of the number of clients who may be eligible for the AMEP, based on their visa subclass, and a self-assessment of their English language proficiency, as stated in their visa application.

The reported fall in client registrations from 73% of potentially eligible AMEP clients in 2006-07 to 59% in 2011-12 is directly related to a change in client disclosure of prior English language proficiency. Since 2006 there has been a notable increase in the number of clients who have chosen to not disclose their prior English proficiency as part of their visa application process (disclosure is voluntary), up from 36% of arrivals in 2006 to 58% in 2012. The reason for this trend is unknown. If a client does not declare their English language proficiency, they can be incorrectly deemed to be eligible for AMEP for the purposes of the registration rate.

The department employs a number of mechanisms to maximise client participation in the AMEP. Each AMEP service provider is required to provide an annual promotional plan for each contract region, which outlines how the AMEP will be promoted to prospective clients (new registrations) and existing clients (client retention). AMEP student counsellor positions are funded at each AMEP service delivery site. The role of the AMEP counsellor is to provide support and assistance to clients throughout their time in the AMEP, including following up on client non-attendance.