

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(102) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

1. Has your Department received complaints from concerned citizens about the use by construction employers of the 457 visa program in a context where, in one part of the country, employers are laying off Australian tradesmen while at the same time employing temporary foreign workers in another part of Australia without offering these jobs to their pre-existing workers?
2. Can you provide details of these complaints?

Answer:

1. The Department is aware of concerns of unions regarding this matter, mostly via the media.
2. The Age Newspaper reported CFMEU concerns over Czech workers on subclass 457 visas to build a highly specialised kiln ahead of Australian firms who also bid for the contract. The Department was advised that these Czech workers had built similar kilns for the company that had won the contract in other countries and hence had specialist skills for this task.