

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(72) Output 1.1: Non-Humanitarian Entry and Stay

Senator Ludwig (L&C 94) asked:

- (1) What sort of process do you go through to check that the intended employer has not refused apprentices and whether they can actually provide a training plan for the apprentice—any of those sorts of issues?
- (2) On what basis do the Regional Certifying Bodies have the right to ask those questions and obtain that information? To find out that information, you would have to talk to the different certifying bodies, for example, in Queensland and New South Wales. They are not the apprenticeship board or whatever name it goes by in the various states, so how do those certifying bodies get access to that type of data? I could imagine that, hypothetically, they would be able to have someone there from the local apprenticeship board, but I do not know. Do you know that?"

Answer:

- (1) The assessment of the sponsor applicant is the first stage of the Trade Skills Training Visa (TSTV) processing. It is a legislative requirement that the sponsor applicant must have the capacity to provide or arrange apprenticeships and have a satisfactory record of, or a demonstrated commitment towards, training Australian citizens and permanent residents. For TSTV holders, training will be provided under the New Apprenticeships Scheme (NAS). Delivery of the NAS is the responsibility of the relevant State/Territory training authority (STA). Consequently advice is sought by the Department from the relevant STA on the sponsor applicants capacity and history in providing training under the NAS. This advice has proven valuable in assessing sponsorships.
- (2) The role of the Regional Certifying Body (RCB) relates to the second step in the TSTV process, the assessment of the visa applicant.

The RCB seeks any relevant information from potential sponsors in an attempt to gauge whether or not the apprenticeship vacancy meets the criteria being assessed as per the guidelines. The sponsor is not legally compelled to provide the RCB with any information. However, if the sponsor does not provide all necessary information to the RCB, the RCB would not be in a position to certify the vacancy.

Under the draft TSTV certification guidelines, RCBs are encouraged to consult widely in their region and this can include other employers, unions and relevant government instrumentalities.

At both the sponsorship and visa application stages the Department liaises with the STAs responsible for apprenticeship training. Information received from these authorities is used in assessing sponsorship and visa applications. This arrangement has worked well with all relevant STAs co-operating.