

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006**

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

### **(81) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry**

Senator Webber asked:

1. Can you tell me how many abattoirs in Western Australia are employing overseas workers on 457 visas?
2. Can you tell me the number of 457 visas these abattoirs are currently employing?
3. Can you tell me what occupations these 457 visa holders are currently undertaking?
4. Are all 457 visas issued for people working in Western Australian abattoirs for skilled work?
5. Did the Department determine whether any of the abattoirs had reduced their Australian workforce in the year prior to employing staff under the 457 visa subclass?
6. Did the Department engage in any checking before approving the current 457 visas in Western Australian abattoirs?

*Answer:*

1. The Department is aware of eight abattoirs in Western Australia that are approved to sponsor overseas skilled workers on 457 visas.
2. In the period 1 July 2005 to 31 May 2006, 273 visas have been granted to these abattoirs.
3. The overseas workers are employed in skilled positions of slaughter persons (ASCO 451115) and Butchers (ASCO 451111).
4. All the overseas workers sponsored by the abattoirs are for skilled work. There have been allegations that some abattoirs are employing 457 visa holders as “boners and slicers”. These allegations are being investigated. While boners and slicers are an ASCO major group 9 occupation, Industry argues that this occupation requires the same AQF qualification as certain ASCO major group 4 meat occupations.
5. The eight abattoirs in Western Australia have advised the Department that they have expanded their workforce, increasing the number of trainees, semi-skilled and unskilled workers as a direct result of employing overseas skilled workers.
6. The department conducts integrity checks into 457 applications which can include referring the visa applications to the overseas post to verify qualifications and/or employment records.