

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(90) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

1. How would you describe the trends in 457 visas over the last few years? Say since 2000?
2. Would it be correct to say that the numbers of 457 visas granted have grown rather quickly, especially since 2004? Wasn't the growth between 2003-04 and the following year, 2004-05, around 21%?
3. There were 40,600 in 2003-04 and almost 50 000 the following year – is that correct?
4. Why was that? What was the change in the visa criteria, conditions or the policies surrounding this category of visa that influenced this growth?
5. An estimate, prepared by the Parliamentary Library from your latest figures which are not yet disaggregated suggests that, in the period July-December 2005, the number might be as high as 65 000. Would you agree with that estimate? When can you provide these disaggregated figures?
6. And that would make the growth since 2003-04 as high as 60%, wouldn't it – in just two years?
7. If you don't agree with this estimate, what would your estimate be?
8. Are the same factors influencing this growth? What additional factors do you think are causing this growth in numbers?

Answer:

1. There has been strong growth in the Subclass 457 programme between 2000-01 and 2005-06. The total number of Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted has grown by 93% from 36,900 in 2000-01 to 71,150 in 2005-06, while the number of primary Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted has grown by 87% from 21,090 in 2000-01 to 39,530 in 2005-06.
2. There has been strong growth in the Subclass 457 programme between 2004-05 and 2005-06. The total number of Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted has grown by 46% from 48,590 in 2004-05 to 71,150 in 2005-06, while the number of primary Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted has grown by 45% from 27,350 in 2004-05 to 39,530 in 2005-06.

The growth in total Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted between 2003-04 and 2004-05 was 23% from 39,500 to

48,590. The growth in primary Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted between 2003-04 and 2004-05 was 22% from 22,370 to 27,350.

3. The total number of Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted in 2003-04 was 39,500. The total number of Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted in 2004-05 was 48,590.
4. The Subclass 457 Temporary Business (Long Stay) Programme is a demand driven programme. The growth in the programme reflects the demand for labour in the economy and the rate of job creation which has averaged around 180,000 per annum in recent years, unemployment at 30 year lows along with strong wages growth.
5. The total number of Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted between 1 July 2005 and 31 December 2005 was 33,210. The total number of Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted for the full 2005-06 programme year was 71,150.
6. The growth in total Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted between 2003-04 and 2005-06 was 80% from 39,500 to 71,150. The growth in primary Subclass 457 visas (excluding Independent Executives and rounded to the nearest 10) granted between 2003-04 and 2005-06 was 77% from 22,370 to 39,530 in 2005-06.
7. Please refer to the response to part 6.
8. Please refer to response to part 4.