

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 23 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0123) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

In relation to the 457 visa program the Budget papers state that this measure aims to improve processing times “from around 4 weeks to around 2 weeks” by opening a new processing site in Brisbane and increasing the number of processing staff. How do you intend to meet this aim? How many additional processing staff will be hired? Will these staff be new employees or staff redirected from other areas of the department?

Answer.

A team of 22 staff has been established in Brisbane, consisting of 14 staff who have transferred from other areas of the department and eight staff recruited from an existing order of merit. The additional staff will bring down the median processing time. Another 1.5 staff has been funded to engage with stakeholders, specifically migration agents and significant users of the 457 visa class, to improve the quality of applications.