

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 24 MAY 2011

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE11/0141) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

CME, ACCI, AMEC and AMMA have all requested that EMAs apply to all projects and all project phases why is the Department insisting on restricting access to EMAs?

Answer:

Enterprise Migration Agreements (EMAs) were introduced following the Government's acceptance of all 31 recommendations of the National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce (the Taskforce). The Taskforce recommended that EMAs be established for 'mega' resource projects, without actually defining the term. Following extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, the government set eligibility criteria at \$2 billion capital expenditure and 1500 peak workforce.

These settings are appropriate and focus the EMA program on those resources projects that have the most significant labour force needs and impact. The EMA program provides benefits to very large resource projects that have complex workforce needs. Smaller resource projects will be able to access all of the currently available migration programs and to the priority processing for subclass 457 visa holders.

The EMA program focuses on the construction phase of 'mega' resource projects as this is where the most significant labour market impacts of a project occur. Industry data shows that the operational labour force of planned mega resources projects is on average 20 per cent of the construction workforce. In addition the operation of resources projects is more long term than the construction phase and therefore more suited to longer term migration solutions and domestic training initiatives.