

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 30 October 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(116) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

What does the Department consider that the trends, as observed, indicate about the policies and practices of employers availing themselves of the 457 visa program?

Answer:

The rising use of sub-class 457 generally is likely to be the result of macro level factors such as the strength of the economy, the rate of job creation, the very low level of skilled unemployment, and the gradual decline in the growth rate of Australia's working age population.

The rising use of sub-class 457 for trades occupations is likely to be the result of factors such as:

- the mining and resource boom – growth in usage of sub-class 457 by mining and resource companies in WA and Queensland has been very strong. In addition, employers in other industries have reported losing trades staff to mining and resource companies and hence some have had to look overseas; and
- the baby boomers moving into retirement and reports that trades workers may be retiring earlier because of the physical nature of the job.