

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

**SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 30 October 2006**

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

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

Senator Carr asked:

1. Why has the number of “university lecturers” entering on 457 visas grown from 10 in 2001-02 to 300 last year?
2. What is the current status of the Labour Agreement involving the higher education employers’ body and the NTEU?
3. Can you confirm that, under this agreement, it is not possible for an employer to import an academic classified below Level C on the standard scale?
4. Can you confirm that, under the Labour Agreement, universities can import academics on 457 visas?
5. Have any higher education employers obtained sponsorship status for the purpose of bringing to Australia academic staff to be employed at Levels A or B?
6. Which higher education employers? How many 457 holders at Levels A and/or B have they brought in?
7. Can higher education employers bring in 457 visa-holders otherwise than under the Labour Agreement?

*Answer:*

1. Higher education employers have been increasingly recruiting academic staff through the Subclass 457 visa programme since 2001-02 as they can lodge applications online and request multiple positions through a single sponsorship. The increase in the number of Subclass 457 visa grants for academic staff has largely been offset by decreasing numbers of Subclass 418 (Educational) visa grants.
- 2, 3 & 4. There are currently no labour agreements involving the higher education employers’ body and the NTEU.
- 5 & 6. The Department uses ASCO to determine which skilled occupations are allowed under the Subclass 457 visa programme. ASCO does not differentiate between the various levels (A to E) used by universities to differentiate salary levels for academic staff. Consequently, the Department cannot provide details of whether any higher education employer has sought to sponsor academic staff employed at levels A or B on a Subclass 457 visa.
7. Yes.