

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 20 OCTOBER 2009

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(125) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Back asked:

Subclass 457 visa program – Implications for WA resource sector

1. What stakeholder consultation / reviews has the government relied on in formulating these new requirements? What were these?
2. What considerations can you detail that shows proper circumstances (sic) has been given to the resources sector where it has been stated in a press release from the Prime Minister, particularly in WA,
3. Has any modelling has been done (sic) to assess whether we are able to fill certain demand trade occupations in the resources sector from within Australia to accommodate the immediate and future needs of the resources sector?
4. Where do they see skilled persons them (sic) coming from? From interstate or overseas?

Answer:

1. The Government has undertaken a number of reviews of the Subclass 457 visa program:

The industry led External Reference Group report in April 2008 reviewed how the program could contribute to the alleviation of skill shortages, especially in major infrastructure, construction, tourism and resource sectors;

The Subclass 457 visa Integrity Review undertaken by industrial relations expert, Barbara Deegan provided three discussion papers and received submissions from stakeholders and consulted widely in the community;

There was extensive consultation with a discussion paper and public submissions on the development of the Worker Protection Act (2008);

The Skilled Migration Consultative Panel was established in July 2008 to provide advice on measures to reform the Subclass 457 visa program. The Panel comprises four state government representatives, four industry group representatives and four union representatives. The Panel members provided input to the reforms based on their constituencies.

An interdepartmental committee was also formed to report to the Government on the reforms to ensure integrity of the program is improved while the program is responsive to labour market needs.

2. These reviews included wide spread consultations with stakeholders. The representatives on the Skilled Migration Consultative Panel include representatives from the WA Government and the Minerals Council.

The Department is a member of the Resources Task Force to consider skilled labour needs for the resources sector.

The Department also has a network of out reach officers, in WA and in the resources industry sector.

3. This is part of the consideration of the Resources Task Force

4. There will be a combination of sources for skilled labour, primarily provided from the Australian workforce and training programs, supported by temporary and permanent skilled migration programs.