

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(177) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration**

Senator Cash asked:

(1) Is the Department considering implementing tighter regulation and monitoring of the industry, to address some agents providing false and misleading information regarding avenues for permanent residency?

(2) If so, what steps are been taken? If not, why not?

*Answer:*

(1)-(2) The Department takes allegations of false and misleading information seriously and is committed to ensuring the integrity of the migration program. The Department has been conducting investigations that target areas of systemic fraud. These are usually complex and lengthy investigations and further detail cannot be provided as several investigations are ongoing.

In addition to investigating possible offences under the *Migration Act 1958*, *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*, the Department may refer such matters to other departments and/or agencies as part of a whole of Government approach to safeguard the integrity of our programs. The joint agency agreement between DIAC, DEEWR (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) and TRA (Trades Recognition Australia) in relation to the General Skilled Migration stream has produced good results and has proven the whole of government approach can produce positive outcomes.

For less serious instances of providing false and misleading information, registered migration agents can be issued a warning letter and/or referred to the Office of the MARA for consideration and possible sanction.