

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(188) Program 1.1: Visa and Migration

Senator Cash asked:

How many agents has DIAC withdrawn eVisa access to since 1 July 2009?

Answer:

A re-registration process has recently been conducted for all education agents who had access to the eVisa facility. This process looked at agents based in Australia, China, India, Indonesia and Thailand.

An estimated 410 Australian-based agents were suspended as part of this process. Agents based in China, India, Indonesia and Thailand were audited by the relevant overseas post. Approximately 100 agents in these areas were also suspended.

This number included agents who did not comply with the terms and conditions of the relevant Deed of Agreement for Student eVisa agents, as well as those who did not apply for re-registration.

Agents who did not meet the terms and conditions of the Deed of Agreement were found to have (over the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009):

- under-utilised the Student eVisa Lodgement Facility;
- a high-level of document fraud identified in Student visa applications lodged; and
- not provided adequate information regarding document verification or secure record-keeping procedures.