

## QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

#### IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

#### **(219) Program: Internal Product**

Senator Cash asked:

To what extent are locally engaged staff in DIAC's overseas posts involved in the processing of visa applications, and if they are involved, what supervision is there of their work by Australian immigration officers?

*Answer:*

While an increasing number of decisions on overseas visa applications are made in Australia as clients either apply for visas directly to onshore processing centres or over the Internet, most locally engaged staff (LES) are involved to some extent in the processing of visa applications decided offshore.

The ability of LES' to make visa decisions under the Migration Act is usually administratively restricted, but the level of restriction varies from post to post. For example, in higher risk countries, some LES make no visa decisions, whereas others only make decisions regarding temporary entry to Australia.

Australian immigration officers supervise LES and ensure visas are processed in line with Australian Government expectations and priorities, including relevant legislation. They provide LES with formal and informal training, including training on ethical behaviour. This includes tailored training applicable to local issues and scenario training where Australian immigration officers guide LES through a range of short ethical dilemma scenarios that may be faced at overseas offices. The scenarios are provided in the Immigration Dilemmas: Ethics, APS Values and Leadership (IDEAL) toolkit, which is designed to encourage and facilitate discussions between leaders and teams about appropriate responses to ethical dilemmas.

Visa caseloads processed offshore are routinely audited by Australian immigration officers to ensure legislative obligations and policy requirements are met.