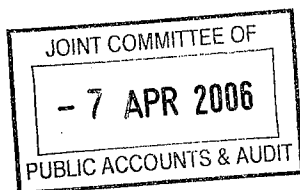




Submission No: 451

Australian Government
Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs



Mr Glenn Worthington
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Department of the House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Worthington

On 27 February 2006 DIMA provided evidence to the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit Further hearing on the Further Review of Aviation Security in Australia.

At the hearing DIMA undertook to answer questions taken on notice. A copy of the questions and DIMA's responses are attached.

Regards

Bob Correll
Deputy Secretary
Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
6 April 2006

people our business

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QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

JCPAA – Further Review of Aviation Security in Australia:

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

The following questions were asked on 27 February 2006:

- 1) Could the Department provide numbers and rates of failed visa applications over the previous calendar year for the three most popular categories of visa applications because of a character issue? If it is possible to refine the information to specify whether the failure of character requirements is political or criminal this would be appreciated.
- 2) How is the trial of the biometrics information identifier going? How long does the trial go for?

Answers:

- 1) As a decision made on a visa application may not necessarily occur during the same year the application is lodged, it is not possible to provide a rate for failed visa applications for a given period. The tables below contain the number of visa grants, and the refusals on character grounds, for the 2004-05 program year and the 2005-06 program year (as at 28/2/06) broken down by permanent and temporary visa classes, and include a breakdown into the top three visa groups for the period. It is not possible to run a generic report that distinguishes the different character concerns that lead to a refusal. In respect of your question we have taken political to mean a security risk.

Permanent Visa Grants and Refusals on character grounds 2004-05 PY and 2005-06 PY (to 28/2/06). Top 3 Breakdown

	2004-05		2005-06 (28/2/06)	
	Grants	Refusals	Grants	Refusals
136 – Skilled - Independent	26454	8	22210	10
309 – Spouse (Provisional)	19650	59	14295	14
100 - Spouse	16845	6	11176	1
Other	107889	76	174522	20
Total	170838	149	222203	45

**Temporary Visa Grants and Refusals on character grounds 2004-05 PY and 2005-06 PY
(to 28/2/06). Top 3 Breakdown**

	2004-05		2005-06 (28/2/06)	
	Grants	Refusals	Grants	Refusals
976 – Electronic Travel Authority (Visitor)	2805203	3	1944250	0
676 – Tourist (Short Stay)	389308	379	319118	191
456 – Business (Short Stay)	174617	47	124230	42
Other	736559	60	496198	20
Total	4105687	489	2883796	253

- 2) The Integrated biometric trials series recently concluded at Cairo Post, Nairobi Post and Sydney Airport. Trial participants were mainly refugee and humanitarian visa applicants.

Two trials were conducted with significant differences between them. The first trial ran from August to December 2005 and focussed on trialling the technology and enrolling the biographic and biometric data of applicants. The follow-up trial, which ran from January to March 2006; measured the impact of incorporating biometric collection into the business process (Refugee and Humanitarian visa interviews) and trialled the on-line ability of the system to verify clients on the basis of their previously enrolled biometrics.

Three types of biometrics were collected in the live operational environments in Africa and Australia; digital finger prints, iris scans and digital facial images. Information was gathered on the merits of different biometric equipment (durability, deployability, reliability and user-friendliness); how DIMA business processes will be impacted (operational requirements including staff training needs); and, the extent to which physical, physiological and environmental characteristics impact the ability to acquire biometrics.

The trials team along with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) are now compiling and analysing the information from the trials to create a final report.