

Question on notice no. 1097

Portfolio question number: BE26-1097

Budget estimates

Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio

Senator David Shoebridge: asked the Department of Home Affairs on 27 May 2026

(1. In relation to the Migration Amendment (Temporary Graduate Visa Application Charge) Regulations 2026 (F2026L00163) :

(a) Jobs and Skills Australia's 2025 Occupation Shortage List states that 31% of Skill Level 1 occupations (requiring a Bachelor's degree and above) are already experiencing a shortage of workers, and projects that over 20% of employment growth in the next 10 years will come from Skill Level 1 occupations, where shortages already exist. These are shortages that Subclass 485 visa holders are well positioned to fill. Prior to registering this instrument, was the Department of Home Affairs advised by Jobs and Skills Australia, the Department of Education, or any other Commonwealth agency of the workforce pipeline implications of doubling the Subclass 485 application fee?

(b) If such advice was sought and received, can the Department table that advice?

(c) If no such advice was sought, what process did the Department follow to assess the impact of this fee increase on Australia's supply of graduates in occupations experiencing documented skills shortages?

2. Sector consultation In relation to the Migration Amendment (Temporary Graduate Visa Application Charge) Regulations 2026 (F2026L00163) :

(a) Did the Department of Home Affairs engage with any stakeholders from within the higher education sector prior to implementing this fee increase? Stakeholders might include students, universities, student associations, or peak bodies such as Universities Australia.

(b) If the Department did engage with sector stakeholders, can their feedback and any advice provided be tabled?

(c) If the Department did not engage with sector stakeholders, on what basis did it conclude that consultation with the higher education sector was not necessary or relevant, given that the fee increase directly affects students enrolled at Australian universities?

3. Impact assessment on international education In relation to the Migration Amendment (Temporary Graduate Visa Application Charge) Regulations 2026 (F2026L00163) :

(a) International education contributed \$52 billion to the Australian economy in 2025 and supports more than 250,000 jobs nationally (Universities Australia, 2026) . Was any impact assessment conducted by the Department of Home Affairs - or requested from any other Commonwealth agency - on the potential consequences of this fee increase on international student visa applications, international student enrolments, and the Australian international education sector more broadly?

(b) If such an assessment was conducted, can it be tabled?

(c) If no such assessment was conducted, can the Department explain what evidence base informed its conclusion that the fee increase would not have a material negative impact on Australia's international education sector or its competitiveness as a study destination?

4. Transitional period In relation to the Migration Amendment (Temporary Graduate Visa Application Charge) Regulations 2026 (F2026L00163) :

(a) The fee increase was announced with approximately two weeks' notice and took effect on 1 March 2026, timed to coincide with the visa expiry date (15 March) for graduates who completed their studies in the 2025 academic year. Many of these graduates had already signed leases, accepted job offers, and made financial plans based on the existing fee structure of \$2,300. Did the Department consider introducing a transitional or grandfathering provision to protect students who were already onshore and had made commitments in Australia based on the previous fee?

(b) If a transitional provision was considered and rejected, what were the reasons for that decision?

(c) If a transitional provision was not considered at all, can the Department explain why the interests of students already onshore at the time of the announcement were not taken into account in the design of this instrument?

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