

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 4 - Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0939_13

Senator Abetz asked on 13 February 2013 , Hansard page 110

Question

Announcement regarding Workplace Bullying

Senator ABETZ: In relation to the bullying announcement, another thought bubble, can I ask: when was the department made aware of this announcement? Mr Kovacic: Since the tabling of the House of Representatives committee report we have been providing advice to government in terms of its response. Senator ABETZ: When were you made aware of this announcement by the minister? It was not straight after the tabling of the report. The government must have told you at some stage 'we are about to make an announcement'. When were you told? Ms Paul: We understand the question. Senator ABETZ: Thank you. Mr Kovacic: We were probably told shortly after government made the decision in terms of timing of the announcement— Senator ABETZ: Which was when? Mr Kovacic: Which would have been in recent weeks. Ms Paul: Do you want us to try to— Senator ABETZ: In recent weeks. Recent days? Be careful. We can FOI some of this material so be very careful. Mr Kovacic: My sense is it would have been some time last week. I am happy to take it on notice. Senator ABETZ: Right. Some time last week, not weeks. Thank you very much. It is a bit concerning I have to refer to FOI for it to become so narrowed. But some time last week you were told. Are you able to tell us, given it was so recent, as to what time last week? Mr Kovacic: To be precise I would have to take it on notice.(page 111) Senator ABETZ: I will have to read the Hansard again and check that one out. The term 'modern family', going back, how did that slip into the media release? Was that a departmental creation or a ministerial office creation? Ms Paul: We would have to check. Mr Kovacic: We would have to check, Senator. Senator ABETZ: All right, if you could, that would be very helpful.(page 111) Senator ABETZ: How much consultation will need to take place with the states before we have some legislation? Mr Kovacic: As I mentioned, the minister's media release envisages consultations around the amendments to the Fair Work Act. Clearly states and territories will be part of those sorts of consultations. Senator ABETZ: We were told at his doorstep interview on this that this could be passed by the end of March. That is not going to happen, is it? Mr Kovacic: Clearly I cannot predict the parliamentary process. Senator ABETZ: All right. Parliamentary Secretary, is this as firm a promise as when the election date is going to be, that this could be passed by the end of March? Senator Jacinta Collins: You are referring, I think, to the minister's comments; so I will take that on notice.

Answer

The term 'modern Australian families' was inserted in the media release by Minister Shorten's Office.

The Department was informed on or around 6 February 2013 of the Government's intention to announce and table the Government's response to the report in the week commencing 11 February 2013.