

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

DEEWR Question No.EW0257_11

Senator Abetz asked on 1/06/2010, Hansard page 55.

Question

**WHO IS ON THE PANEL FOR FWO FOR EXTERNAL ADVICE AND HOW IS THIS
PANEL SELECTED?**

Senator ABETZ—Where does the Fair Work Ombudsman get its advice from? Is it all in house or do you have a panel of experts that you draw upon for particular issues, and, if you do, how are they selected? Mr Wilson—I will ask Ms Smith to answer that. Ms Smith—The advice that we prepare is by and large in-house advice. We have a large number of staff who have had a great amount of experience in workplace relations over many years. We take escalations from the contact centre, from the email inquiry line and from some direct external lines for industry bodies and unions. Where we have a query that we are uncertain of, for various reasons, we have our internal legal team, headed by Mr Leigh Johns, provide a response. There are odd occasions where we need to go externally for another view, but that is a rare thing and we do that through a panel that Mr Johns could speak more about. Senator ABETZ—Can you take on notice who is on the panel and how they were selected? Mr Johns—I can answer those questions. Senator ABETZ—We have time constraints, so can you take that on notice?

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman provided the following response.

Who are the Legal Firms on the FWO panel?

The most recent panel was appointed in 2009 (through until 2012)	
National Panel	Australian Government Solicitor Clayton Utz Corrs Chambers Westgarth Deacons Minter Ellison

NSW/ACT	Bartier Perry DLA Phillips Fox FCB Workplace Lawyers Holding Redlich Sparke Helmore
WA/SA	DLA Phillips Fox Hunt & Hunt Lavan Legal Piper Alderman Sparke Helmore
QLD/NT	Ffrench Commercial Lawyers Gadens Lawyers Holding Redlich Hunt & Hunt McCullough Robertson
VIC/TAS	DLA Phillips Fox Freehills Holding Redlich Hunt & Hunt Maurice Blackburn Russell Kennedy Sparke Helmore Zeeman & Zeeman

How were the firms chosen?

The most recent panel was appointed in 2009 (for the period through until 2012). The FWO received 50 Tenders, comprising 116 separate nominations for our legal services Panels (we have four regional and one national panel - firms could bid for more than one provided they met the location requirements).

The process took approximately six months from drafting to debriefing, with the actual evaluation and selection process running approximately six weeks and involving a Project Team of 17 (including two external advisors inclusive of an external probity advisor).