

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

**Outcome 5 - Workplace Relations**

**DEEWR Question No.** EW0312\_12

**Senator Abetz asked on 30/05/2011, Hansard page 121.**

**Question**

**Appointments**

Senator ABETZ: Moving on to the national consultative group that has been appointed to manage the implications of the equal pay case: how were the people selected to serve on that? Undoubtedly it was merits based—the failed Greens Senate candidate for the ACT happened to get a guernsey. But could you possibly take that on notice for us? Mr Kovacic: If you are asking if we discriminate against people because they have been candidates for parliament, the answer is no—be they Liberal, Green, Labor or what have you. So I do not know what comment is supposed to indicate. Senator ABETZ: Look, the number of appointees to Fair Work Australia— Senator Chris Evans: Just another low swipe at someone. I do not see that— Senator ABETZ: is just a momentous— Ms Paul: The person you are referring to is, of course, a person of great experience in the relevant sector, particularly by being president of the Australian Council of Social Services in the past. Senator ABETZ: That she is, but I am sure there are others as well; so if you could advise me as to how these people were selected? I can understand why Senator Collins was, and why you have got a member of the department; but how were the SACS providers and the unions chosen? Senator Evans: I think it was a decision of government, but I will get you an answer. Just on your point about a particular person: I understand she is now very senior with Uniting Care, and her selection would have been based on them being, I think, the largest provider in the area. Ms Paul: Yes. As well as her former presidency of ACOSS, no doubt.

**Answer**

The membership of the Community Sector Wages Group was decided by the Government.

The role of the group is to examine how to manage the potential implications of pay increases that may be awarded by Fair Work Australia in the case. The membership of the group reflects this role and has a balance of representatives from the social and community services sector, unions involved in the case and the federal, state and territory governments.