

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

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

Outcome 4 – Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0283_13

Senator Abetz asked on 29 May 2012 , Hansard page 71

Question

Ministers Consultation

Senator ABETZ: Can we be told the date that the department was first approached by the minister as to how to react? Can we also be told what motivated this? Ms Paul: That is a question for the minister. We have already taken the date on notice. Senator ABETZ: Yes, but what motivated this approach? Senator Jacinta Collins: You cannot expect me to answer about what motivated the minister. Senator ABETZ: Yes. Senator Jacinta Collins: I can take it on notice and ask him what motivated him. Senator ABETZ: As his representative here, you may have been briefed by him, but clearly not so. Senator Jacinta Collins: All I can do is make some general observations. Even some of the matters that have appeared before this committee have informed the minister about some of the concerns, such as referrals to the police. There has been an accumulation of issues in this respect. Senator ABETZ: With whom did the minister consult, if anybody? Please give proper, specific answers and not, 'The minister consulted with a variety of stakeholders.' That is the sort of nonsense we are getting by way of answers in a whole range of endeavours at Senate estimates, not only this department but a whole range. I invite specific answers in this area. Senator Jacinta Collins: What was the question? Senator ABETZ: With whom the minister consulted prior to deciding to take action in relation to registered organisations amending legislation and, after announcing it, with whom he consulted. Whilst we do not need 100 per cent detail, organisations would be helpful rather than 'various stakeholders' which would tell us nothing. Senator Jacinta Collins: As the previous discussion highlighted, there are obviously members of the NWRCC that were consulted prior to the meeting on Friday, but I will respond more fully on notice. Senator ABETZ: All the announcements were made before. I acknowledge we had the ministerial council last Friday, but certain legislation may have been drafted by that time. A whole schedule was put to the council. Senator Jacinta Collins: I will take that on notice.

Answer

Can we be told the date that the department was first approached by the minister as to how to react? Can we also be told what motivated this?

The Department was first approached by Minister Shorten's Office on 20 March 2012 in relation to possible amendments to the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* to protect the interests of members of registered organisations.

With whom the minister consulted prior to deciding to take action in relation to registered organisations amending legislation and, after announcing it, with whom he consulted?

In addition to consulting with Cabinet colleagues, the Minister consulted with the National Workplace Relations Consultative Council (NWRCC) on 25 May 2012 regarding the proposed amending legislation. The parties in attendance at NWRCC were:

- Master Builders Association
- National Farmers Federation
- Australian Education Union
- Unions NSW
- Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Australian Industry Group
- Business Council of Australia
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry