

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

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

Outcome 4 – Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0666_13

Senator Abetz asked on 17 October 2012 , Hansard page 110

Question

FWA President involvement in Grocon dispute

Senator ABETZ: On the Grocon dispute, Parliamentary Secretary, are you able to tell us whether Mr Shorten initiated the conference at Fair Work Australia between the parties? Senator Jacinta Collins: Are you referring to what you raised earlier today when you say 'the conference'? Senator ABETZ: The conference shared by the President of Fair Work Australia and— Senator Jacinta Collins: Whereas your question earlier today was, 'What initiated the President's involvement?' Senator ABETZ: That is right. Senator Jacinta Collins: Is it the same question? Senator ABETZ: I ask the question I just did. Senator Jacinta Collins: There are two issues, which is why I am attempting to clarify so there is no ongoing confusion here. The two questions are, 'Who initiated the president's involvement?' and, 'Who initiated that a conference occur?' Do you want me to answer them as two distinct questions? What are you trying to get at? Senator ABETZ: I would have thought they were quite similar. Without the approach to the president, it stands to reason that no conference would have been held. The president indicated earlier today that it was not on his initiative; it was somebody approaching him. There has been a certain minister who has been in the background, and media have been reporting that it was this minister who initiated this, that he had made a call and requested the parties— Senator Jacinta Collins: I have no direct knowledge of that. Senator ABETZ: We had the evidence of the President of Fair Work Australia, which might conflict with that, so if you can get clarification from the minister on notice that would be helpful. Senator Jacinta Collins: Sure.

Answer

Following discussion with the President of Fair Work Australia in which the President confirmed his availability to continue to assist the parties, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations wrote to Grocon and the CFMEU on 28 August 2012 advising them of this and requesting that Mr Daniel Grollo and Mr Dave Noonan attend discussions in their capacity as the respective leaders of their organisations. Both Mr Grollo and Mr Noonan subsequently agreed to make themselves available to meet on 30 August 2012 before the President.