



Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates 2019-20
Wednesday, 4 March 2020
Daily summary

Here is the summary of today's proceedings in the Education and Employment Legislation Committee estimates hearing.

The committee met from 9.02am to 10.49pm.

The committee called the departments and agencies with responsibility for Employment, Industrial Relations and Small Business matters, including:

- Attorney-General's Department–Industrial Relations Group, Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency (ASEA), Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation, Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO), Fair Work Commission (FWC), Registered Organisations Commission (ROC), Safe Work Australia, Comcare; and
- Department of Industry, Science Energy and Resources–Small and Family Business Division, and Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO).

Topics discussed by the committee included:

- potential impact on contractors and casual workers of the Coronavirus;
- conduct of a Fair Work Commissioner;
- wage theft, and the measures and resources allocated by the FWO to combat it;
- assistance for migrant workers provided by the FWO;
- impact of the *Fair Work Amendment (Repeal of 4 Yearly Review and Other Measures) Act 2018* on enterprise agreement approval times;
- composition of the FWC Bench, including gender and the balance of employer and union backgrounds;
- litigation involving the ROC;
- application of legislative penalties to different organisations by the ROC;
- measures taken by Safe Work Australia to address occupational lung disease and engagement on the National Dust Disease Taskforce;
- rate of workers compensation claims for bullying and harassment;
- mental and psychosocial health in the workplace;
- bushfire recovery loans and grants for small businesses;
- interactions between the ASBFEO and dairy farmers;
- impact of supply chain finance on small businesses;
- franchising and exploitative business practices; and
- transparency of commercial franchise rating services.

The committee will next meet at 9.00 am on Thursday, 5 March 2020 in Senate Committee Room 2S3, calling departments and agencies with responsibility for Employment, Skills and Education matters, including the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Australian Research Council (ARC), Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), and Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).