

Question on notice no. 7

Portfolio question number: EEC-BE21-07

2021-22 Budget estimates

**Education and Employment Committee, Attorney-General's, including
Industrial Relations matters Portfolio**

Senator Louise Pratt: asked the Attorney-General's Department on 1 June 2021—

Senator PRATT: Can you confirm you've made six appointments to the Fair Work Commission, all of whom were from employer groups?

Senator Cash: I don't have that information in front of me. We'll take that on notice for you

Answer —

Please see answer and supporting document attached.



Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash

ATTORNEY-GENERAL
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SENATE
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 1 April 2021

APPOINTMENTS TO THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION

Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations, Michaelia Cash, today announced the appointment of five new Fair Work Commission members.

Mr Michael Easton has been appointed as a Deputy President, commencing 7 April 2021.

The following people have been appointed as Commissioners:

- Ms Bernadette O'Neill, commencing 6 April 2021
- Mrs Sophie Mirabella, commencing 24 May 2021
- Mr Phillip Ryan, commencing 28 June 2021
- Ms Alana Matheson, commencing 5 July 2021.

Biographies for the appointees are attached.

On behalf of the Australian Government, I congratulate the new Deputy President and the Commissioners on their appointments. I am confident that the appointees will execute their duties with impartiality and diligence.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Mr Michael Easton is a Barrister with 21 years' experience in the legal profession. He specialises in industrial and employment law representing small and large businesses, government agencies, executives and employees. Mr Easton was called to the Victorian Bar in 2004 and has been a senior member of the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal since 2019.

COMMISSIONERS

Ms Alana Matheson is Director of Workplace Relations Advisory at KPMG Australia and has 15 years' experience in workplace relations. Her experience includes as Deputy Director of Workplace Relations at the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and working for the Housing Industry Association in positions including Executive Director, Workplace Relations & OHS. She holds a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice.

Mrs Sophie Mirabella is General Manager, Government and Media Relations at Hancock Prospecting Pty Limited, having joined its executive team in 2016. Prior to this Mrs Mirabella was a member of the House of Representatives, serving as the federal member for Indi in Victoria for 12 years. Mrs Mirabella was called to the Victorian Bar in 1998 and has been a Public Policy Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

Ms Bernadette O'Neill has been General Manager of the Fair Work Commission since 2012 and has 18 years' experience working in industrial relations at the state and federal level. Ms O'Neill was admitted as a legal practitioner in 2000 and has worked in employment and industrial law. She was Assistant National Secretary for the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union from 1996 to 1999.

Mr Phillip Ryan has 21 years' service with the New South Wales branch of the Australian Hotels Association, a peak body for hospitality employers. He has also been the National Director of Legal and Industrial Affairs for the Australian Hotels Association and Legal Practitioner Director of Hospitality Legal Pty Limited since 2016. Mr Ryan was admitted as a legal practitioner in 2009.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-22

Attorney General's Department

EEC-BE21-07 - FWC appointments - Employer groups

Senator Louise Pratt asked the following question on 01 June 2021:

Senator PRATT: Can you confirm you've made six appointments to the Fair Work Commission, all of whom were from employer groups?

Senator Cash: I don't have that information in front of me. We'll take that on notice for you.

The response to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Five appointments were made to the Fair Work Commission on 1 April 2021. They were not all from employer groups. The appointees have worked in diverse roles, including with employer and employee groups, before being appointed to the Commission. For example, Mr Michael Easton is a Barrister with 21 years' experience in the legal profession, specialising in industrial and employment law, and has previously been a senior member of the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Ms Bernadette O'Neill, among her other roles, has been General Manager of the Fair Work Commission and Assistant National Secretary for the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union.

Further details, including biographies, for each of the appointees are set out in the media release of 1 April 2021 entitled 'Appointments to the Fair Work Commission'.