

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

**Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman**

**DEEWR Question No.** EW0082\_14

**Senator Abetz asked on 3 June 2013, Hansard page 6**

*Refers to previous DEEWR Question No EW0767\_13.*

**Question**

**FWO - Relates to EW0767\_13 (FWO Staffing)**

Senator ABETZ: ..... I move on to question 0767\_13? That deals with a decrease in staff. You told us in that written answer that there were 100 less staff between 31 March 2012 and 31 December 2012. Can you give us an update? Has there been a further decrease, or is then an increase in the number of people working for the Fair Work Ombudsman? Mr Campbell: Other than the usual ones and offs after the material that is reported in that question on notice, I would not think there has been significant change. Senator ABETZ: So stable would be would be an accurate description? Mr Campbell: Pretty stable. I would say about 800 staff within the organisation. Senator ABETZ: Alight. Then we head to a few adjustments here and there in corporate finance, albeit I am not sure exactly what percentages they represent. In corporate there were eight departures. Possibly I should have asked for this so I could get a better understanding of it, but how many people are actually employed in corporate? Does a reduction of eight represent, for example, and eight per cent decrease or a 50 per cent decrease? Mr Campbell: That is a good question. pg. 7, Senator ABETZ: Could you take that on notice for the categories: corporate, finance, IT, project management, education, major employers, quality and information policy team et cetera. But then we get to the contact centre compliance and dispute resolution, which to me seem to be the three areas where the rubber hits the road, where the ombudsman is interacting with the public. In those categories we seem to have fairly substantial decreases: contact centre, 22; compliance, 48; dispute resolution, nine; and in legal nine. Are we able to give an explanation for those areas for what appears, on the raw number at least, a substantial decrease? Mr Campbell: That would represent maybe about seven per cent of the total. My maths is not that great, but I could get that tidied up. Senator ABETZ: Join the club! Mr Campbell: Thankfully, that is not what I am employed for. But I can get that data for you in percentage terms. You are quite right: that is not an insignificant number of staff that the agency had to shed last financial year. But that is a reality that all public service agencies face from time to time. Our ability to provide our services through the contact centre and through the inspectorate remain solid. And I am comfortable with the way we are performing. Certainly we are hitting the benchmark targets that this agency aims for. So the numbers are not, as you point out, insignificant. Senator ABETZ: Ultimately the percentages in the whole list will tell us. But I am concerned that it is sometimes asserted that, when departments or agencies are given a financial haircut, the first area that suffers is the service delivery area and not the corporate and the bureaucracy areas.

So I just want to ensure that the actual service delivery area of the Fair Work Ombudsman's office has not had a more significant haircut than other areas. If we were to press the rewind button on Fair Work Ombudsman estimates to 12 or even 18 months ago, I am sure I would have been told that all these positions were absolutely essential to be able to deliver the full suite of services that the public requires. And now here we are 18 months later saying that we can do without—what is it?—88 people in fairly important areas. If you could take all that on notice for me, I would be much obliged.

## Answer

*The Fair Work Ombudsman has provided the following response.*

The following table provides the number of voluntary redundancies at the Fair Work Ombudsman during the period 31 March 2012 to 31 December 2012, and includes a breakdown of:

- the business units affected, and
- the overall percentages of the business units affected by the departures.

<b>Fair Work Ombudsman: voluntary redundancies 31 March - 31 December 2012</b>		
<b>Branch</b>	<b>Number of voluntary redundancies</b>	<b>Number of voluntary redundancies as a percentage of total business unit</b>
<b>Corporate</b>	2	3.2%
<b>Finance</b>	1	5.8%
<b>Information Technology/ Project Management</b>	4	7%
<b>Education/ Major Employers</b>	1	4.5%
<b>Knowledge Management &amp; Future Services</b>	2	3.2%
<b>Contact Centre</b>	14	6.5%
<b>Compliance &amp; Dispute Resolution</b>	39	10.6%
<b>Legal</b>	4	7.8%
<b>Total Agency voluntary redundancies: 67</b>		