

# Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

**Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman**

**Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000238**

**Senator Ludwig provided in writing.**

### **Question**

#### **FWO - Departmental Dispute Resolution**

1. How are disputes between departmental and/or agency staff mediated?
2. Are any outside firms contracted to assist with this process? If yes: please list them, please include:
  1. The structure of payments made to each firm (e.g. retainers, fees for each consultation etc).
  2. Amount paid to each firm since the last budget.
  3. When the contract with the firm commenced.
  4. When the contract with the firm will expire.
  5. Why the firm was selected to provide the service.
  6. Please provide a list of disputes referred to the firm, including a brief description of the dispute.

### **Answer**

1. The Fair Work Ombudsman manages disputes between staff in accordance with the agency's Managing and Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

When considering the most appropriate resolution process, regard is given to whether a matter can be resolved through informal processes in the first instance.

Informal resolution options include self-resolution, supported self-resolution, apologies, counselling, alternate dispute resolution (such as mediation or facilitated conversations) or other management actions such as individual training, interpersonal skills development training or group training for entire teams.

When required, a formal process will follow the steps outlined in the agency's Guide for Handling Conduct Issues or Procedures for Handling Public Interest Disclosures.

2. The Fair Work Ombudsman has not contracted any outside firms to assist with mediating disputes between staff in this financial year.