

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004160

Senator Cameron asked on 30 May 2017 on proof Hansard page 59

Question

FWO - Apprentices and trainees - resignation due to underpayment and exploitation

Senator CAMERON: Ms James, have you been advised of any relationship between the noncompliance for apprentices and completion rates?

Ms James: I am aware that a lot of work has been done around dropping completion rates, and I think commencements—there are also some issues there—and one of the things that we were conscious of in embarking on the national apprenticeship campaign was that there are other dynamics of play when it comes to people's choices about taking on apprentices and then working or continuing to work under those employment arrangements.

Senator CAMERON: Is that a yes or a no?

Ms James: You asked about a relationship between compliance and completion.

Senator CAMERON: Yes.

Ms James: I am not sure there is a causal relationship there, but I am aware that there are issues around completion rates and start-up rates.

Senator CAMERON: So you are not aware of any causal—so none of the apprentices have indicated to the Fair Work Ombudsman that they have left their apprenticeship because of underpayment and exploitation?

Ms James: It would not surprise me if that was a factor with some. I would need to take that on notice to make sure one way or another, to have that direct evidence.

Senator CAMERON: All right, could you take that on notice to provide details of how many apprentices have raised this as an issue?

Ms James: Yes.

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman does not keep data about whether or not apprentices have completed their apprenticeship, or the specific reasons why employees have left their employer.