

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000882

Senator Cameron asked on 19 October 2016 on proof Hansard page 112

Question

FWO - Apprentices pay and conditions

Senator CAMERON: Remember you had the big analysis of apprentices, and we found out that only 6.1 per cent of employers were compliant with regard to pay and conditions for apprentices. This is one of your big previous work—

Ms James: I remember we had conversations about what is now a quite dated campaign, a small state-based campaign. Since then, we have actually done some work on apprentices in the campaign space.

Senator CAMERON: On notice, can you tell us what additional work you have done. Can you provide updated figures from that previous report. Have you discussed with the government what can be done to stop this sort of behaviour in relation to apprentices—if you can answer that now? Have you had any discussion about these rip-offs of apprentices?

Ms James: I do not think we have had any recent discussions about apprentices.

Senator CAMERON: Have any of the ministers raised this issue with you after your report?

Ms James: That campaign report that you are referring to predates this minister and the minister before.

Senator CAMERON: That is why I said: have any ministers raised that with you?

Ms James: No.

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) is finalising its report of the National Apprenticeships Campaign which will be released shortly.

In addition, the FWO checked wage records with respect to apprentices in the building industry as part of its National Building and Construction Industry Campaign. The report was released on 29 July 2015.

Of the 610 businesses audited during the campaign, 194 (32%) businesses (who engaged approximately 340 apprentices) had apprentice records audited. Of these:

- 129 (66%) were fully compliant with their apprenticeship obligations;
- 52 (27%) were not compliant with respect to pay rates;
- 13 (7%) were not compliant with respect to record keeping and pay slip requirements.

In total, \$69,785 was recovered for 194 apprentices with a median recovery of \$1,318 (recoveries from individual employers ranging from less than \$50 to over \$7,500).

FWO campaign reports are published on the FWO's website at www.fairwork.gov.au.