

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-001069

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

FWO - Working Women's Centres

- The funding for Working Women's Centres is to cease at the end of the calendar year, is that correct?
- Is the Government going to be providing funding to maintain these centres?
- I'm advised the Centres are able to tender for funding as part of the Government's Community Engagement Grants Program, is that correct?
- Are there any particular guidelines around that tender?
- Organisations that deal with migrant, older and younger people might be in stronger position than those who deal with women to secure funding, is that correct?
- Are women listed as a vulnerable cohort?
- When were the tender documents due to be released?
- When were they released?
- When do tenders have to be submitted?
- When will there be a determination on funding – particularly noting that in the absence of further government funding the Centres will have to close their doors at the end of December?

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) currently provides funding to five community organisations - the Employment Law Centre of WA, JobWatch (Victoria), SA Working Women's Centre, NT Working Women's Centre, Queensland Working Women's Service. Funding will cease on 31 December 2016.

In the 2016-17 Budget the Australian Government committed \$7.3 million over four years to fund the Community Engagement Grants Program. The selection of funding recipients will be determined through an open and competitive selection process in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Not-for-profit community organisations, including the Employment Law Centre of WA, JobWatch (Victoria), SA Working Women's Centre, NT Working Women's Centre,

Queensland Working Women's Service, are eligible to apply for a grant under the Community Engagement Grants Program.

The Community Engagement Grants Program Guidelines provide information about the program including eligibility requirements and the selection criteria. The Guidelines are available on the FWO's website: www.fairwork.gov.au.

A primary objective of the Community Engagement Grants Program is to facilitate the provision of assistance relating to Commonwealth workplace laws, targeted specifically at vulnerable groups within the community with a particular focus on employees and small business owners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young or aged people, and migrant workers.

The Program will focus on these members of the community because, in the FWO's experience, they are more likely to experience difficulties in understanding, asserting and exercising their workplace rights and obligations.

The Guidelines do not list women as a vulnerable cohort.

Funding for the Community Engagement Grants Program was announced in the 2016-17 Budget process. The Guidelines for the Program were due to be released once high quality planning and design for the new Community Engagement Grants Program had been completed in accordance with Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines.

The FWO called for applications for funding under the Program by publically releasing the Guidelines on 23 September 2016. Applications must be received by 5:00 pm Friday 4 November 2016 (AEDT) to be considered.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be told of the outcome of their application via email in late November 2016/early December.