

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2012-2013**

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

DEEWR Question No. EW0891_13

Senator Abetz asked on 13 February 2013, Hansard page 33

Question

Seasonal Labour Mobility Program

Mr Scully: In accordance with the portfolio budget statements for last year, the additional funding for the organisation for 2012-13 was \$196,000, so it is quite small. It stays at that level for the forward estimates period. Senator Jacinta Collins: But again, Senator, as I understand it, that relates to compliance issues around the program. Senator ABETZ: Yes—within the Fair Work Ombudsman. Mr Wilson: The work we have done in respect to that matter is work done in a number of places in the organisation, partly through our education teams but also more importantly through our inspectorate. The work we have done is of this type and I can give you more detail if you want. We conduct some on-arrival briefings for groups of employees about their rights. We provide fact sheets to a number of other people and we then conduct audits and investigations and also provide some workplace relations compliance history checks for other agencies. Senator ABETZ: Can you take that on notice and provide me with a detailed answer, please?

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman has provided the following response:

The \$196 000 relates to funding provided to the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) for the 2012-13 financial year for the Seasonal Worker Program (the Program) which commenced on 1 July 2012. This program replaced the Pacific Seasonal Workers Pilot Scheme (the Pilot) which commenced in August 2008.

The Program (like the Pilot) is administered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The FWO's responsibilities to the Program are to provide education and advice to participants and ensure compliance with Commonwealth workplace laws.

Since the commencement of the Pilot to 31 December 2012, the FWO has:

- Conducted educational on-arrival briefings for 23 groups of employees about their workplace rights;
- Sent fact sheets to a further 936 visiting employees as well as sending electronic versions for many others (many employers print their own copies of fact sheets for employees);
- Commenced 44 proactive audits;
- Commenced 5 investigations in response to complaints received; and

- Conducted 121 workplace relations compliance history checks for DEEWR on prospective Approved Employers (and Approved Growers).

The FWO also has a dedicated email address for Program participants and provides workplace relations advice and assistance where it receives enquiries from DEEWR, employers, or employees in the Program.

The FWO provides dedicated educational content on the FWO's website www.fairwork.gov.au on the rights and obligations of participants in the Program.