

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

DEEWR Question No.EW0573_11

Senator Abetz asked on 20/10/2010, Hansard page 51.

Question

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Senator ABETZ—.....Then is it agreed that the launch of the education fees, which include directing employers to the dedicated retail website, was delayed? Are we agreed with that? Mr Wilson—We will take that on notice. You are putting a proposition to us. I have not seen the email and I do not know what was in the mind of that particular officer when they communicated in that way. I think, with respect, from what I have heard of the email that you have read out that that probably provides the answer which I would give, which is that the agency felt, for reasons that I do not have with me right now, that it was more beneficial to delay it because of other priorities. We will provide you with an answer as to what may have got in the way, but it presumably will not satisfy beyond the answer that we have already given. Senator ABETZ—But what could be a greater priority than to tell employers about their responsibilities that start as of 1 July and say, 'Oh, no, we've got other priorities and we'll tell you a fortnight later and then you can try and backdate whatever you might have to do'? I would have thought your priority ought to be to get this up and out there so employers would be aware of their responsibilities on or before 1 July— Mr Wilson—We can take that on notice.

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman has provided the following response:

The Fair Work Ombudsman identified the retail sector to form one of its four national campaigns in the 2010/11 financial year.

In mid February 2010, the Fair Work Ombudsman wrote to key retail industry stakeholders announcing its intention to conduct a national audit of the retail industry. The Fair Work Ombudsman met with key retail industry stakeholders during March, April, and May 2010 to discuss the National Retail Industry Campaign (the retail campaign).

On 1 April 2010, the Fair Work Ombudsman issued a media release advising a retail sector campaign would be undertaken.

To assist employers in the retail sector better understand their rights and requirements under the *General Retail Industry Award 2010* and the National

Employment Standards, the Fair Work Ombudsman developed educational materials and a dedicated retail industry web page in consultation with key industry stakeholders.

The information and advice to be included on this web page was already available to callers to the Fair Work Infoline, however it was considered beneficial to have this industry specific information also made available 24/7 on Fair Work Online.

On 30 June 2010, the dedicated retail industry web content went live. This content was originally planned to go live on 21 June 2010, however a delay occurred as the finalisation of retail industry content took longer than anticipated.

The retail content provided additional detail of the specific requirements of the *General Retail Industry Award 2010*. Information concerning employer responsibilities from 1 July 2010 that was relevant to retail employers was already available at www.fairwork.gov.au at this time.

On 8 July 2010, the Fair Work Ombudsman distributed an email to 19,927 retail employers informing them of the retail campaign and directing them to the dedicated retail industry pages on the Fair Work Ombudsman's website.

On 8 July 2010, the Fair Work Ombudsman issued a media release confirming the development of a dedicated retail industry web page to provide a place for retail employers to access materials specifically designed for small to medium sized businesses.