



Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates 2024-25
Wednesday, 26 February 2025
Daily summary

The committee met from 9:07am until 9:43pm.

The committee called the Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio, discussing the following topics:

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Cross-portfolio, Corporate and Enabling Services, and general matters

- Wage underpayments at the department and audits of payroll systems;
- The right to disconnect for departmental staff; and
- Correspondence between DEWR and the CFMEU and its representatives.

Outcome 3: Workplace Relations

- Secure Jobs, Better Pay Act review;
- Differences in powers between the abolished Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and the Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman;
- Wage growth since 2022 and the protection of penalty rates;
- The use of artificial intelligence in benefit payment systems;
- Portable leave entitlements;
- Review of the Fair Work Act Small Claims Procedure;
- Appointment of the new Chair of Safe Work Australia;
- Relationship between the department and the CFMEU administration;
- Appointment of the new Chair of Safe Work Australia
- Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Legislation and related matters;
- The right to disconnect;
- Pay increases for labour hire workers as a result of government legislation; and
- Public train service disruptions in Sydney due to industrial action and the possibility of ministerial intervention.

Outcome 1 Employment:

- Computer errors in the Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF) leading to welfare recipients having their payments cut off;
- Pacific and Labour Mobility Scheme – Use by labour hire providers – exploitation of workers – review of the scheme – accommodation for workers and DEWR/LGA discussions in Tasmania – expansion of the PALM Scheme into new sectors – accreditation of individuals coming in under the scheme;
- Review into the legality of the systems that perform mutual obligations for jobseekers;
- Parents Pathway Program; and

- Impact on engagement when mutual obligations are paused for jobseekers.

Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman

- Investigations into underpayments of black coal miners;
- Update on the Edmund Marinjini case;
- Litigations commenced in this financial year;
- Number of site visits since taking over the powers of the now abolished ABCC;
- Investigations into the building and construction sector;
- Right to disconnect education material; and
- Investigations into wage theft at universities.

Fair Work Commission

- Monitoring of the administration of the CFMEU; and
- Right to disconnect.

Outcome 2: Skills and Training (including Jobs and Skills Australia)

- Utilisation and outcomes of the Fee-Free TAFE initiative;
- Strategic review of the Australian apprenticeship system;
- Collaboration between Jobs and Skills Australia and the future Australian Tertiary Education Commission;
- Incentives for employers for priority occupations;
- New Energy Apprenticeships Program; and
- Increasing female participation in male-dominated apprenticeships.

Australian Skills Quality Authority

- Cancellation of Registered Training Organisations, Luvium Pty Ltd; and
- Decision to cancel the registration of Barkly International College.

The committee released Comcare and the Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation.

This concludes the committee's examination of the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio. The committee will examine the Education portfolio tomorrow, Thursday 27 February 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact the secretariat on (02) 6277 3521 or eec.sen@aph.gov.au.