



Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2024-25
Wednesday 6 November 2024
Daily summary

The committee met from 9.03am until 10.05pm.

The committee called:

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman, Fair Work Commission, Comcare, Safe Work Australia, Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency, Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation, Australian Skills Quality Authority, and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

Corporate and Enabling Services, Cross-portfolio and general matters

- CFMEU administration - *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*;
- Coal LSL Annual Report - Breach of Section 83 of the Constitution; and
- Findings by the Fair Work Ombudsman on the underpayment of staff at the department.

Outcome 3 - Workplace Relations

- CFMEU administration - Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act; appointment of the administrator, cost of the administration, High Court challenge;
- Protection of whistleblowers;
- Operation Rye - investigating allegations involving the CFMEU;
- Overview of the operations of the Closing Loopholes legislation;
- Application of the Right to Disconnect;
- Amendments to the Commonwealth Procurement Principles; and
- Same Job, Same Pay legislation.

Outcome 1 - Employment

- Employment service license reviews; updates to the IT system, data provided to providers;
- PALM Scheme; outstanding workers compensation claims, accommodation approvals, correction to data, changes in worker numbers since July 2023;
- Recommendation 75 from the Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services report, government response;
- Paid employment pathway programs;
- Delays in processing of jobseeker job applications;
- Complaints from jobseekers about being harassed for payslips by employment providers;
- Procedural fairness given to providers versus participants; and
- Financial viability assessment for Work Force Australia.

Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman

- Right of entry permits; permits held by CFMEU members;
- Edmond Margjini case;
- Litigation commenced in the building and construction industry;
- Underpayments of staff at universities;

- Engagement with the university governance panel;
- Recovery of construction workers' wages;
- Investigations into misconduct in the CFMEU;
- Penalties given to employers for underpayments;
- Timeline for awareness of misconduct in the CFMEU;
- Building Bad documentary series;
- Investigation into the underpayment of staff at the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; and
- Investigation into underpayment of coal miners.

Fair Work Commission

- Anti-avoidance provisions in respect of the administration of the CFMEU;
- Whistleblower scheme; number of reports on the portal;
- Powers of the General Manager in respect of the administration of the CFMEU;
- Complaints received by the administrator about the CFMEU;
- Labour hire arrangement orders;
- Right of entry permits;
- Comments made by Secretary Zach Smith; and
- COVID-19 vaccine mandates.

Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation

- Annual report 2022-23; compliance issues;
- Governance of Coal LSL; and
- Incorrect payment of levies.

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

- Fee-free TAFE; briefings to the Minister on data, commencement, completion and cancellation data.

Australian Skills Quality Authority

- Cancelling registration of providers and qualifications of students.

The following agencies were released from the hearing without questions:

- Comcare
- Safe Work Australia
- Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research

The committee will next meet at 9.00am on Thursday, 7 November 2024 in Committee Room 2S3, for examination of the Education Portfolio.