

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Legislation Committee**

**Energy Efficiency Homes Package Senate Inquiry
Friday 26 February 2010**

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No: 1
Hansard Page ECA: 48

Senator BIRMINGHAM asked on 26 February 2010, Hansard page ECA48.

Question

How many places have been filled?

Language, Literacy and Numeracy and Australian Apprenticeships Access Program – places for former ceiling insulation installers.

This question was asked in relation to the 2,000 places in each of the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program to assist former ceiling insulation installers announced as part of the Clean Sustainable Skills Package on 30 July 2009.

Answer

This measure was announced as part of the overall Clean Sustainable Skills Package on 30 July 2009. It was to commence on 1 January 2010 and continue until end 2011. The measure seeks to support ceiling insulation installers to transition to skilled employment once they had finished their work under the Energy Efficient Homes Package.

None of the places under this measure had been taken up as at 19 February 2010. With the cessation of the Home Insulation Program on 19 February 2010, we anticipate these places will be taken up by insulation installers exiting from the industry now and into the future.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No. 2 and 3
Hansard Page ECA: 52&53

Senator Fisher (Chair) asked on Friday 26 February 2010, Hansard page ECA52, ECA53.

Question

Broad Topic: Transitional assistance and Structural Adjustment

Chair - Can you explain how you have done work of the sort of supporting firms that you described in terms of helping them transition through when they were making workers part time?

Chair – Can the department please provide on notice details of programs that the department has implemented in the past which the department considers to be on all fours with your role in implementing this program, particularly bearing in mind the duration of the circumstances that have led to the problem?

Answer

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is well placed to develop and implement large scale programs of a training, labour market adjustment and job placement nature. The department was responsible for previous Job Network services and in 2009 implemented Job Services Australia. Job Services Australia currently supports over 800,000 job seekers in work experience, training and assistance in dealing with vocational and non-vocational barriers, in over 2100 sites across the country, representing an investment of \$4.9 billion over three years.

The department used the Local Employment Coordinator initiative as a model for the Insulation Employment Coordinators to be deployed to broker assistance to the insulation industry. Local Employment Coordinators are placed in 20 Priority Employment Areas and work with local businesses, councils, Job Services Australia providers and training organisations to maximise job and training outcomes for workers and businesses impacted by the Global Recession.

The department has also provided training assistance to workers on reduced working hours, such as those at Holden and Tenneco in the automotive industry. Workers have been supported to access the Productivity Places Program Structural Adjustment element places while on shorter working weeks, such as those on part time or stand down arrangements.

- This assistance is assessed on a case-by-case basis as situations arise. These arrangements, such as for 3000 training places for Holden workers, were established quickly as a result of workers facing periods of stand down and reduced working hours in the wake of the Global Recession.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No: 4
Hansard Page ECA: 53 & 54

Senator Troeth asked on 26 February 2010, Hansard page ECA 53 & 54

Question

Industry Roundtables

Did your department participate in any stakeholder roundtables or consultations facilitated by the department of the environment? When were they held? Would you be able to provide me with a list of the participants in the roundtable?

Answer

Yes, the department attended industry roundtables and seminars with Registered Training Organisations in 2009.

The roundtables were organised and convened by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). Roundtables were attended on 20 March 2009; 8 May 2009 and 12 November 2009. Lists of participants at these roundtables would need to be sourced from DEWHA.

The department also attended and assisted in delivering information at seminars for Registered Training Organisations in every capital city except Darwin between 23 June 2009 and 3 July 2009. These seminars were organised by DEWHA. Lists of participants would need to be sourced from DEWHA.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No: 5
Hansard Page ECA: 56

Senator Troeth asked on 26 February 2010, Hansard page ECA 56.

Question

DEEWRs knowledge of Workplace Safety Breaches in the Home Insulation Program

Is it possible to gain a list of the membership of the committee in which the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union raised concerns about workplace safety breaches in the Home Insulation Program?

Answer

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed to promote linkages between Job Services Australia providers and other Steering Committee members. The MOU Steering Committee supports the shared goals of employment services and other members to help job seekers connect to opportunities. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union raised the issue of safety at a meeting of the employment services Energy Efficient Homes Package MOU Steering Committee meeting on 26 November 2009. The Union noted the public reports of installer deaths but did not raise any specific instances of workplace safety breaches.

The membership of the Energy Efficient Homes Package MOU Steering Committee is

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Chair)
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union
Master Builders Australia
Housing Industry Association
National Employment Services Association

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No: 6
Hansard Page ECA: 58

Senator Birmingham asked on 26 February 2010, Hansard page ECA 58

Question

Meeting with Ee-Oz

In relation to a discussion about a meeting between the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council (Ee-Oz) in November 2009, were there minutes made of that meeting?

Answer

The department met with EE-Oz (the ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council) on 6 November 2009. No minutes were taken at this meeting.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No. **7**
Written QoN

Senator Birmingham provided the following questions in writing.

Question

Wages for former insulation installers

What proportion of wages will former insulation installers expect to be paid under the support mechanisms being offered by the Government? How much will former insulation installers be paid under the support mechanisms being offered by the Government? How quickly is this support available? When can the first installer expect to receive a financial payment?

Answer

On 24 February 2010, the Prime Minister announced a \$41.2 million Insulation Workers' Adjustment Package to help businesses retain workers in the insulation and related industries until the new Renewable Energy Bonus Scheme begins and to support workers who have been made redundant as a result of the changes.

The package includes a \$10 million Insulation Workers' Adjustment Fund to help businesses retain and retrain their workers during the transition period. It will be allocated on the recommendations of a team of new, dedicated Insulation Employment Coordinators and existing Local Employment Coordinators, who will broker and put in place a package of assistance for each eligible business, which could include access to training and employer incentives to retain employees. A maximum incentive payment of up to \$4,000 per employee will be available for the period early March 2010 to 30 June 2010 for eligible businesses.

Redundant insulation workers will be entitled to income support from the Australian Government subject to standard tests, such as for eligibility, and waiting periods. However, they will all be eligible for immediate access to personalised employment services at the Stream 2 level or higher with a Job Services Australia provider of their choice, under the Government's Compact with Retrenched Workers. Assistance can include job search help, career advice and referral to one of 7,000 dedicated training places to assist in gaining future employment.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No. **8**
Written QoN

Senator Birmingham provided the following questions in writing.

Question

Support for installation businesses

What financial support exists for businesses involved in installing insulation? What assistance is there for these businesses to pay rent? What assistance is there for these businesses to pay for orders of stock made prior to the suspension of the program? What tax relief is available to these businesses? When, if at all, can the first insulation installation business expect to receive a payment? How many of these businesses existing prior to the suspension of the Home Insulation Program? How many does the Government estimate have or will exit the business before resumption of the program?

Answer

This is a matter for the Department of Climate Change.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No. **9**
Written QoN

Senator Birmingham provided the following questions in writing.

Question

Support for manufacturers/importers

What financial support exists for businesses involved in manufacturing or importing insulation? What assistance is there for these businesses to pay rent? What assistance is there for these businesses to pay for orders of stock made prior to the suspension of the program? What tax relief is available to these businesses? When, if at all, can the first insulation manufacturing or importing business expect to receive a payment? How many of these businesses existing prior to the suspension of the Home Insulation Program? How many does the Government estimate have or will exit the business before resumption of the program?

Answer

This is a matter for the Department of Climate Change.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No. **10**
Written QoN

Senator Birmingham provided the following questions in writing.

Question

Consultation with States

What consultation took place with state governments prior to the suspension of the program? What consultation took place with the states prior to the announcement of financial assistance for those impacted by the suspension? What role will the states have in providing or coordinating assistance? What consultation is taking place with the states in relation to the design of the new program?

Answer

This is a matter for the Department of Climate Change.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Question No. 11
Written QoN

Senator Birmingham provided the following questions in writing.

Question

Role of Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council

What role did the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council play in developing the training package for home insulation workers? What section or sections of the Council undertook this work? What feedback was provided about this work and the role of the Council by state training councils? What role did the Electrical Industry Skills Council play in the development of the training package and what feedback did they provide?

Answer

The Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council (CPSISC) was contracted by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) to develop a set of training materials and resources based on existing units of workplace competency contained in CP08- Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework Training Package.

As this contract was separate to the contract the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations holds with CPSISC, any details of which section in the Council undertook the work, feedback provided by State councils or whether the ElectroComms and Energy Utilities Industry Skills Council was involved in the contract would need to be sourced from DEWHA.