QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No.CA0006_11

Senator Siewert provided in writing.

Question

THE NTER MONITORING REPORT - WORK EXPERIENCE

The table 4.6 on p42 on work experience participation rates lists many outcomes as 'less than 20' with the claim that this is to 'protect the privacy of individuals'. 1. Can you explain why it is necessary to list small participant numbers as 'less than 20' to 'protect privacy of individuals'? 2. Has this request for privacy come from the individuals concerned or the organisations involved? 3. Why isn't a similar policy employed across the reporting requirements in other areas? (like IM numbers or in AIHW reports) Also the numbers don't add up – there is a total of 91 at the bottom 4. Is it true that a total of only 91 people were placed in work experience programs as of 30 June 2010? … That at 1 January 2010 there were 4193 participants? 5. Can you provide accurate total figures for 1 January and 30 June 2010 and update the document? 6. Can you explain the five different 'other' categories?

Answer

DEEWR releases employment services administrative data in accordance with the Privacy Act, the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act, the Social Security (Administration) Act, and the Family Assistance (Administration) Act. The data is released in a format which cannot be used to identify individuals without their consent.

DEEWR generally releases employment services administrative data by removing unique identifiers, and where counts for populations are less than twenty, not providing the actual count and indicating in the report that the value of the cell is, less than twenty. Any value less than twenty is only reported when the data cannot be analysed to identify an individual.

Agencies use various methods to confidentialise data, due to differences in related Acts and datasets. For example, with the 2006 Census, small introduced random errors were applied to data by the ABS to minimise the risk of identifying individuals.The Department has not received requests from individuals or organisations involved to confidentialise the data.

Questions about the reporting of other agencies would need to be directed to the agencies concerned.

In regard to the number of Work Experience Activities, the *Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Monitoring Report – July to December 2009* reports on the total number of activities undertaken in the four remote Employment Service Areas in the Northern Territory in the six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2009. The data

are broken down by Indigenous (4193 activities) and non-Indigenous job seekers (91 activities) and are cumulative for the six-month period, noting that individual job seekers may have undertaken more than one activity during the reporting period.

The *Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory Monitoring Report – January to June 2010,* which is publicly available at http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/, uses an improved methodology providing point-in-time data on the number of activities being undertaken in the 73 prescribed communities on 1 January (2,779 activities) and 30 June (3,855) 2010. The report also provides information on the number of individual job seekers engaged in the 2,779 and 3,855 activities, being 2,347 and 3,046, respectively.

The Work Experience Activity data provided by the Department include three categories with 'other' in the activity description. The 'Other Approved Programs' categoryis for recording participation in government administered employment or training programs such as Language, Literacy and Numeracy program, the Apprenticeship Access program, the Adult Migrant English Program, the Youth Pathways Program and the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program. The category is also used for state and territory government programs such as the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative and the Workforce Participation Partnerships program in Victoria.

The 'Other Non-vocational' category is for recording non-vocational activities when none of the alternative non-vocational activity type descriptors is appropriate, for example, personal development courses.

The 'Other' category is a general category for recording activities when none of the available activity type descriptors is appropriate.