

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-001487

Senator Marshall asked on 02 March 2017 on proof Hansard page 44

Question

FWO - Working Women's Centre funding

Senator MARSHALL: Thank you. I have one last question in this area. Of the working women's centres that did not receive funding and that were in operation, do you know how many have ceased operating as a result of not achieving funding?

Mr O'Shea: I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, there has not been any working women's centre that has closed as a result of this decision. My understanding is that there are three working women's centres—Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland. The Northern Territory and South Australian centres are still receiving funding under the new program. The Queensland working women's centre is not receiving funding under our program, but they do receive funding from other sources. The Fair Work Ombudsman is not their only source of funding. They have private funding, as I believe, and significant funding from the Queensland government.

Senator MARSHALL: Maybe it is unfair to ask you to do this, but it is better than me doing it.

Senator Cash: You do not have to be quite so honest, Senator. Keep the facade.

Senator MARSHALL: I think Senator Rice said a number of times that they are going to close their doors. Could you maybe just take on notice and find out whether that is the case?

Mr O'Shea: My understanding is that that is not the case, but I will find out.

Senator Cash: Senator Marshall, I will seek advice on that as well because I was surprised by that claim. My understanding is that the Commonwealth or the FWO is not the only source of funding.

Senator MARSHALL: That is correct.

Senator Cash: Perhaps we could also find out the other sources of funding to make the picture complete.

Mr O'Shea: These are community organisations and they receive funding from a lot of sources. Some of it is public, like the funding that we give them and the Queensland government give them. But my understanding—

Senator MARSHALL: You are making it sound now like there is plenty of money for community resources.

Mr O'Shea: That is not what I am trying to do.

Senator Cash: No. Just other sources.

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) understands that the Queensland Working Women's Centre (QWWC) continues to operate. The QWWC's 2015-16 Annual Report sets out total income for the financial year. Sources of income listed in the QWWC's Annual Report include funding under the Community Based Employment Advice Services program which was administered by the FWO, Queensland State government funding, interest, membership fees and donations.

The FWO has also secured employer donations to the QWWC as terms of enforceable undertakings entered into by employers as the result of the FWO's enforcement action, including \$10,000 so far this financial year.