

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-001527

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

FWO - Working Women's Centres

Last estimates, the Ombudsman was asked about whether Working Women's Centres would be funded out of the Community Engagement Grants Program. Applications closed on 4 February. The FWO was particularly focussed on youth and migrant workers as vulnerable workers; women were not singled out in the guidelines. It was not known whether the Working Women's Centres would receive funding to stay open.

The FWO has since announced successful grant applications:

<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/2017-media-releases/january-2017/20170105-cegp-media-release>

There were 81 different organisations who applied for grants - how many of them were previously funded under the Community-Based Employment Advice Services program?

How many previously funded organisations did NOT received funding under the new Community Engagement Grants Program?

Which Working Women's Centres received funding under the Community Engagement Grants Program?

Which Working Women's Centres did not receive funding, and have they ceased operating as a result?

Of the organisations which were successful in obtaining funding under the Community Engagement Grants Program: how much did they receive, what is the funding period, what are they funded to do, will they be undertaking new projects or continuing existing ones?

Answer

Five organisations previously funded under the Community Based Employment Advice Services Program (CBEAS Program) applied for grants under the Community Engagement Grants Program (CEG Program).

One organisation previously funded under the CBEAS Program did not receive funding under the CEG Program.

The Northern Territory and South Australian Working Women's Centres were granted funding under the CEG Program. The Queensland Working Women's Centre was not successful in its application for funding under the CEG Program. As at 29 March 2017, the centre had not ceased operating.

The organisations granted funding under the CEG Program, and the amounts awarded, are set out in the table below. The funding period for all grants is 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020 (4 years).

Organisation	Amount (over 4 years and subject to indexation)
Employment Law Centre of Western Australia Incorporated	\$1,442,320
Job Watch Incorporated	\$1,800,000
Working Women's Centre SA Incorporated	\$1,073,480
NT Working Women's Centre Incorporated	\$1,510,000
Qld Fruit and Vegetable Growers Ltd t/as Growcom Australia	\$800,000
Redfern Legal Centre Limited	\$574,200

The programs and services these organisations are funded to deliver are a mix of new and existing services, including expansion or growth of some existing services.

The Employment Law Centre of WA will operate an Employment Law Legal Advice Service for vulnerable clients across WA. This service consists of:

- advice line services – a telephone advice line providing high quality and comprehensive employment law advice
- further assistance appointments – legal assistance appointments with solicitors for more extensive legal advice, drafting letters and other documents, and assistance to clients to prepare for conciliation or hearings.

Job Watch Incorporated will deliver a telephone information and referral service to vulnerable workers in Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. In Victoria, Job Watch will also provide legal practice assistance and casework, community legal education, and self-help information sessions via outreach programs (for example Duty Lawyers at Study Melbourne and the Fair Work Commission).

Working Women's Centre SA Incorporated (SA WWC) will provide information, advisory and advocacy services for vulnerable workers in South Australia. This includes specialist advice sessions, self-help information sessions, case work services and a small business owner advisory service (where clients are employed by a small business). SA WWC will provide outreach, community engagement and education services targeting vulnerable communities and workers in South Australia.

The Northern Territory Working Women's Centre (NT WWC) will provide information, advisory and advocacy services for vulnerable workers in the NT. This includes specialist advice sessions, self-help information sessions, case work services and a small business owner advisory service (where clients are employed by a small business). The NT WWC will also provide outreach, community engagement and education services targeting vulnerable workers and small business owners in the NT.

Growcom will conduct a four year project that aims to provide clear pathways towards improved practice nationally across the horticulture industry. The project includes:

- delivering a workplace relations best management program to employers (initially in Queensland and expanding across Australia in later years);
- working with the industry accreditation program (Freshcare) to develop and pilot a third-party auditable workplace relations unit to enable growers to demonstrate good workplace and supply chain practices;
- delivering a program of workshops to employers and labour hire companies, focusing on specific issues relating to the treatment of vulnerable workers;
- a national communication strategy focusing initially on compliance but moving towards best practice;
- providing a telephone hotline for general industrial relations advice for all employers in the horticulture industry;
- building employee understanding of workplace rights and support mechanisms utilising the existing network of regional officers who make up the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN);

- developing vulnerable worker welcome strategies in each region and identifying community touchpoints for workers utilising the QAWN.

Redfern Legal Centre will run the NSW International Student Employment Law Service, an independent and free employment law service for international students. It will also develop the employment section of 'My Legal Mate', a multi-language interactive mobile phone app for international students. The app addresses three legal areas identified by students and service providers as being of greatest need: employment, housing, and disputes with education providers.