

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee****ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE****Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates, 1 to 4 June 2004

**Question: Bud 97****Topic: ACCC – Collective Bargaining****Hansard Page: E30**

**Senator WEBBER**—I might start with a few questions on the issue of collective bargaining. I have noticed in recent media reports, in the past few months, that the ACCC has issued a number of authorisations of collective bargaining arrangements. The most recent decisions have covered newsagents, New South Wales TAB agents, Tasmanian chicken growers—and it is a pity Senator Sherry is not still here—and private hospitals. How many collective bargaining arrangements has the ACCC authorised in the last 12 months; and have you changed your approach in assessing these authorisation proposals?

**Mr Grimwade**—I might be able to answer that. I do not have an exact figure for how many we have authorised in the last 12 months. I can certainly take that on notice, but—

**Senator WEBBER**—If you could take that on notice.

Answer:

Since June 2003 the ACCC has authorised six collective bargaining arrangements. During that period, the ACCC has not denied authorisation to any collective bargaining arrangements.

The number of collective bargaining arrangements authorised in the last year does not signify a change in approach by the ACCC in assessing such applications. Rather, it reflects an increase in the number of such applications lodged. As has always been the case, the ACCC authorises such arrangements where it considers that it is in the public interest to do so.