

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13  
28 and 29 May 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Small Business Hotline

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, Tuesday 29 May 2012, pages 55 and 56)

**QUESTION No.:** BI-89

**Senator RYAN:** If a small business rings up about an inquiry in respect to an award—and we can surmise that it is a Commonwealth award at this point—whom do they get referred to?

**Mr Schwager:** Primarily, Fair Work Australia would be one particular agency, but it could also be to a relevant industry association who have expertise in awards.

**Senator RYAN:** Do you have internal documents as in decisions, effectively, for questions like this?

**Ms Launder:** I could take that one on notice so that we can look at our data to provide you with advice about specific questions of that nature that have been asked and where they were referred to.

**Ms Butler:** You are correct. They run quite a significant database. It sits behind the small business support line and that database is constantly being refreshed with new contact points. Also, the questions tend to be more along the lines of, 'I'm in such and such a business so can you tell me about the kinds of awards that I might need to know about?' They may get several referrals, not just one referral point, as part of the phone conversation or the live chat.

**Senator RYAN:** Given that this is not an easy thing for a small business to navigate, do you have data on where calls are referred to?

**Ms Launder:** We do.

**Senator RYAN:** So I could ask you a series of questions of, for example, what proportion of queries were referred to Fair Work Australia?

**Ms Launder:** You could.

**Ms Butler:** Yes, we could give you that information.

**Senator RYAN:** You keep a breakdown of issues that are called about?

**Ms Butler:** We do, indeed.

## **ANSWER**

The Small Business Support Line commenced collecting data on referrals for award enquiries on 1 October 2011.

From 1 October 2011 to 31 May 2012, the Small Business Support Line received 137 enquiries relating to awards. All of these enquiries were referred to Fair Work Australia.

The following table lists additional referral points provided to those customers. Depending on the nature of the enquiry, a customer may receive multiple referrals.

*Additional referral points provided to customers enquiring about awards*

<b>Referral Point</b>	<b>Number of Referrals</b>	<b>Percentage of Referrals</b>
Business.gov.au	14	19.4%
ATO	12	16.7%
Lawyer/Solicitor	8	11.1%
Accountant	7	9.7%
ATO Super Line	7	9.7%
WorkCover/WorkSafe/SafeWork	5	6.9%
Lifeline	2	2.8%
Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commission	2	2.8%
Independent Contractors Hotline	2	2.8%
NSW Community Justice Centres	1	1.4%
WA Citizens Advice Bureau	1	1.4%
Police	1	1.4%
Eastern Suburbs Business Enterprise Centre, NSW	1	1.4%
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	1	1.4%
Australian Apprenticeships	1	1.4%
Other Federal Government Department	1	1.4%
Kangan Institute Richmond TAFE Business Enterprise Centre	1	1.4%
Scamwatch.gov.au	1	1.4%
Australian Prudential Regulation Authority	1	1.4%
Darwin Business Enterprise Centre	1	1.4%
Centrelink	1	1.4%
Liverpool Business Enterprise Centre	1	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100%</b>