

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2011-12
19 October 2011

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: ETHICAL CLOTHING AUSTRALIA

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Colbeck

QUESTION No.: SI-140

1. How many sweatshops does the Department assess existed in Australia at the time of the commencement of the TCF Strategic Capability Program?
2. In addition to the funding given to Ethical Clothing Australia, have any other grants or payments been made by the Department to trade unions since November 2007? If so, please list each instance - including the amount of funding provided and the reason(s) for the payment(s).
3. What success does the Department consider that Ethical Clothing Australia has achieved in Australia?
4. Aside from the DEEWR and DIISR funding disclosed at that Estimates hearing, has Government funding of any other kind been provided to Ethical Clothing Australia? If so, what has the nature and amount of that funding been?

ANSWER

1. By their very nature, it is difficult to quantify the number of ‘sweatshops’ that may have existed in Australia at the commencement of the TCF Strategic Capability Program.
2. Ethical Clothing Australia is not a union owned company, it is a joint business–union initiative that is governed by an independent and not-for-profit committee of management, Homeworker Code Committee Inc, with representation from major stakeholders in the textile, clothing and footwear industry.

The Australian Government has engaged the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA) to deliver community-based services which enhance the support available under the TCF Structural Adjustment Program. Under the contract, project officers work with retrenched TCF workers to ensure that they are able to access employment services, value added training, mentoring and one-on-one support that will help them back into new employment. Since this agreement commenced in 2008/09, the TCFUA has received \$720,000 (GST inclusive).

No funding has been provided by the Department to other trade unions since November 2007.

3. Ethical Clothing Australia's activities primarily come under the portfolio responsibility of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and this question would be best raised with that Department.
4. We are unaware of Ethical Clothing Australia receiving any other government funding other than the funding received from DEEWR and DIISR discussed at estimates.