**SENATE EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**2005-2006 ADDITIONAL SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING
16 FEBRUARY 2006
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Outcome 2: **Higher productivity, higher pay workplaces**

Output Group 2.1: **Workplace relations policy and analysis**

Output 2.1.1: **Workplace relations policy advice**

Question Number: **W718-06**

Question:
Senator Wong asked in writing:

The discussion paper issued by the Award Review Taskforce on 20 December 2005
states that there are tens of thousands of wage classifications currently in awards
(Rationalisation of award wage and classification structures, para 2.3) Of this data,
a) How many is 'tens of thousands' and how was it calculated?
b) How many of these 'tens of thousands' are actually different or vary from the 15
level metal industry structure?
c) How many different classification levels are there really (taking into account the
alignment of relativities)?
d) How many different classifications apply in each workplace (not interested in
mathematical averaging)?

Answer:

a) The figure quoted in the discussion paper is an estimate based on the number
of state and federal awards and an assumption about the average number of
classification wages in awards. Many awards contain in excess of ten
classification levels and associated wage levels. For example, the Metal,
Engineering and Associated Industries Award 1998 contains fourteen
classifications and over twenty different wage levels including apprentice and
trainee rates of pay.

b) The Award Review Taskforce Secretariat is currently undertaking research to
determine the extent of variation in classification structures. Initial research
suggests that there is considerable variation in classification structures and that
the metal industry structure is rarely used as the model for classification
structures in other industries.

c) The research has not been completed, so it is not possible to respond at this
stage.

d) The Taskforce has commissioned an award relevance study which will, among other issues, examine the use of classifications and award wages in Australian workplaces. The study is yet to be completed.