

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

**2006-2007 ADDITIONAL SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING  
15 FEBRUARY 2007  
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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

**Output Group 2.2: Workplace relations implementation**

**Output 2.2.6: Office of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council**

**Question Number: W1238-07**

**Question:**

Senator Wong asked in writing:

**OHS Advisers Program** According to W564-07, The Australian Industry Group (AIG) was contracted to establish an OHS Advisers Program to assist small business to comply with the OHS laws and standards operating in each state and territory. The small business OHS advisers will provide both educative and advisor services and will operate nationally across all industry sectors and urban, rural and regional areas. a) what is the cost involved in the OHS Advisers Program? b) how many “educative and advisor services” have currently been run? How many people participated? Where and how were these services conducted? c) How many of the businesses involved in these services operated across more than one OHS jurisdiction? d) Did the AIG work in collaboration with state OHS offices? If not, how is the AIG qualified to provide accurate information on OHS? e) Can the reports from the AIG on this programme be made publicly available? If not, why not? f) Why is DEWR contracting to provide information on laws which are not their own? Why aren't small businesses being referred to the relevant OHS offices/departments in their state or territory for information?

**Answer:**

*a)* The Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio Budget Statements for 2005-06 included funding of \$7m over two years for the Small Business Occupational Health and Safety Advisers Programme (the programme).

*b)* The programme is delivered in 3 stages which include attendance at a training seminar, a workplace safety assessment and assistance with the development of an individual safety plan.

From the commencement of the programme, seminars were scheduled across a broad geographical spread to ensure services were provided for business employing less than 20 staff in urban, regional and rural locations across all states and territories. As the programme progressed, the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) has scheduled seminars in locations where businesses registered interest.

As at 28 February 2007, 308 seminars have been conducted across Australia, with a further 66 seminars currently scheduled to 30 June 2007. A total of 3 039 participants have attended these seminars. A breakdown by state is shown below:

	<b>Completed seminars as of 28 February</b>	<b>Scheduled seminars to 30 June</b>
Australian Capital Territory	18	3
New South Wales	88	20
Northern Territory	8	2
Queensland	62	13
South Australia	30	7
Tasmania	15	2
Victoria	66	15
Western Australia	21	4

c) This information is not collected from participants.

d) The programme has been designed to deliver a consistent message about the importance of good workplace safety practices, however seminar material is tailored for each state/territory with reference to the relevant legislation. During seminars and on-site services, participants are provided with information and documentation from their state/territory regulator.

The Ai Group fully met the requirements of the open tender for the programme.

e) The progress and milestone reports are not publicly available as these reports contain confidential information. Where participants have agreed, case studies of their experiences under the programme have been developed for public release.

f) The programme was announced as part of the *Flexibility and Productivity in the Workplace: The Key to Jobs* statement.

In delivering the programme, the Ai Group is required to establish effective relationships with state and territory governments to ensure minimal duplication of service provision, compliance with state/territory regulations for OHS and to maximise any synergies which may be identified. The programme provides an additional resource for small business.

The programme website has been developed to take into account state/territory legislation. For example:

- The 'safety information' page provides an overview of how to manage safety and then has links to the homepage of each regulator.

- Topic related information is broken up by state/territory, with a link to relevant information available on the state/territory website.
- The 'Related Safety Links' take businesses to the small business resources and programs available in their jurisdiction.

**Estimated cost:** Based on the FOI calculator it has taken approximately 3 hours and 10 minutes at an estimated cost of \$61.50 to prepare this answer.