

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman

DEEWR Question No.EW0951_10

Senator Abetz asked on 10/02/2010, Hansard page 38.

Question

ABANDONED CALLS –FAIR WORK INFOLINE.

Senator ABETZ—And if you abandon the call, does that show up as a waiting period before the call is answered? Answer: no. What is the bet? Mr Wilson—The answer is I do not know. Senator ABETZ—What is the bet? Take that on notice, and that would then show that you have got a very nice set of statistics for public display, but they do not show if somebody has been waiting for 30 minutes or longer and then gives up in disgust and hangs up. But you say, ‘Oh, calls are answered within seven minutes.’ That sounds great because it does not take into account the calls where people give up in disgust. CHAIR—But just coming back to the— Senator ABETZ—So take that on notice for us, because I think— CHAIR—The proposition— Senator ABETZ—that will give us a lot better insight. I just want to clarify— Senator Arbib—Senator, I think you are actually wrong on that. I think you are wrong on that, but we are happy to check. Mr Wilson—We will check. ... Senator ABETZ—If you could come back just on that basic issue as soon as possible, I would be very interested. CHAIR—Just to clarify, Mr Wilson: I think the proposition that was being put to you in respect to the question that we have got the written answer to was that people actually stayed on the line for 20 or 30 minutes before they got an answer—so we are not talking about dropping off anyway—and your evidence is that that is not true, that cannot be right. Mr Wilson—We will check. Certainly the information I have, which was obtained in the past couple of days, would indicate that that is not correct, but certainly I will check. We are very concerned to make sure that we give correct advice.

Answer

The Fair Work Ombudsman has provided the following response:

The statistics, provided by Telstra, our telephony provider, are based on the average wait for answered calls only. These statistics do not include average wait for abandoned calls. The Fair Work Ombudsman does not have the functionality within its reporting system to retrieve data on waiting times for all abandoned calls. Hence, average wait data for all abandoned calls is not available.

However, records are available of the maximum waiting time for an abandoned call on a given day (as distinct from the average of all abandoned calls on that day) In the month of January 2010, the longest wait to abandonment recorded was 34 minutes 9 seconds.