

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0870_11

Senator Nash asked on 24/02/2011, Hansard page 46.

Question

**COMPLETION OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST REPORTS
FOR ANAO REPORT**

Senator NASH—We were just on the ANAO report. The report also identified that, on a number of occasions, department staff had failed to complete the requisite confidentiality and conflict of interest reports. Page 22 of the report says: DEEWR did not consistently apply aspects of the quality control framework for the assessment process. For example, some staff involved in the assessment of applications did not complete the required confidentiality and conflict of interest declarations, or undertake assessor training. Similarly, for the sample of applications reviewed, in a range of instances key assessment procedures (such as eligibility and compliance checks) were not applied or appropriately documented. How many failures actually were there that were reported as conflicts of interest? Mr Robertson—I will explain some of the background of the ANAO's finding there. In the early days of the setting up of the program—remember the ANAO report was around the set-up of the program—there were some statements made that there would be conflict of interest statements completed by assessors, which aligns quite strongly with what happens in other areas of the department. When the ANAO came through, they were not able to find evidence of that, but the point that needs to be made is that they were all public servants that operate under APS code of conduct, values et cetera. So their observation was more that we made a statement but we could not find documentary evidence to substantiate that in 100 per cent of the case. There was no material impact on the assessment process. Senator NASH—Okay. But how many failures were there to do that reporting? Mr Robertson—I would have to take that one on notice. Senator NASH—If you could, that would be great.

Answer

All assessors for Trade Training Centre rounds, by the nature of their employment with the APS, are bound by the APS code of conduct which prescribes conflict of interest provisions. No conflicts of interests were declared and the ANAO found no evidence of apparent, or real, conflict of interest by assessors.

Completion of confidentiality and conflict of interest forms has been rectified and all relevant staff completed the forms for Round Three. Documentary evidence of this has been sent to ANAO during the compilation of the ANAO Performance Audit on the Trade Training Centres Program.