

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

**2005-2006 BUDGET SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING
30, 31 MAY and 3 JUNE 2005**

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Office of the Employment Advocate

Question Number: W262-06

Question:

Senator Marshall provided in writing:

Can you provide more information about the nature of the contracts you have with these community partners?

Answer:

There are thirteen community partners. The OEA has an agreement with either a Working Womens' Centre and/or Community Legal Centre in every State and Territory. The contracts deal with the provision of advisory services about rights and obligations under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* and other employment matters to workers in a disadvantaged bargaining position. The current funding is for two years ending on 31 August 2006. After an initial instalment is paid the payments are then made by quarterly instalment.

The contracts essentially provide that the Working Womens' Centres and/or Community Legal Centres agree to do the following:

- fund a specialist employment and industrial relations advice service, meeting the salary and associated on-costs of an industrial liaison officer (for a Working Womens' Centre) or a qualified solicitor (for a Community Legal Centre);
- ensure that the services provided do not unnecessarily duplicate other legal aid or industrial advice services already available within the defined community or area and cooperate with other legal aid services and community service providers in their area;
- provide telephone, face-to-face and email advice and assistance on workplace relations matters and specifically on Australian workplace agreements (AWAs), and to pay particular attention to people in a disadvantaged bargaining position;

- give priority to AWA related matters and to matters referred to it by the Commonwealth;
- file quarterly statistical reports and six monthly written reports; and
- not engage in any activity or obtain any interest during the course of the contract that is likely to conflict with or restrict them in providing the services under the contract to the Commonwealth fairly and independently, or give the impression of so doing.