

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 7

DEEWR Question No. EW287_09

Senator Abetz asked on 17 June 2008 in writing.

Question

Supported Wage System

- i.) How much funding was provided to employers under the Supported Wage Scheme?
- ii.) Is the Department able to provide a breakdown on the type of employers that use the Supported Wage Scheme?
- iii.) How frequently are people reassessed for SWS?
- iv.) Is a person able to have a reassessment done earlier?
- v.) Is there any delay in having an assessment done – i.e. what is the average time between booking an assessment, and having an assessor able to undertake this assessment?
- vi.) Can the Department provide information on the average wait on a state by state basis?
- vii.) What happens to the job seeker if there is a delay in assessment? How much are they paid per week?
- viii.) Has the Department received any complaints from people who believe they have been inaccurately assessed?
- ix.) What process does the Department follow to check whether this is the case?
- x.) Is it possible that certain employers would establish good relationships with Supported Wage Assessors, in order to have an employee assessed at a lower pro rata pay level?
- xi.) Are all SWS employees enrolled with a Disability Employment Network provider?

Answer

- i.) Total expenditure for the Supported Wage System between 1 July 2007 and 31 March 2008 was \$2,324,662.
- ii.) Data is not available on the type of employers that use the SWS.
- iii.) SWS productivity reassessments are conducted at least annually.
- iv.) A reassessment can be requested earlier, on reasonable grounds.
- v.) The duration of the period between when applications for SWS are approved and when SWS assessments are conducted is up to 12 or 16 weeks depending on the provisions of the particular award or industrial agreement under which the person is employed.
- vi.) This data is not available.
- vii.) The employees continue in their employment, under the usual state and federal industrial relations laws. The minimum amount payable to employees under the provisions of the SWS Model Clause is the SWS Minimum wage of \$66 per week (effective from 1 October 2007). This is reviewed annually as part of the Australian Fair Pay Commission's Federal Minimum Wage Determination and accordingly the SWS minimum wage will increase to \$69 per week from 1 October 2008.
- viii.) DEEWR has received 10 complaints from people or their advocates who believe that they were inaccurately assessed during the financial year 2007–08.

- ix.) Complaints relating to the SWS are managed by DEEWR under the standard process for all employment and related services providers. If necessary, a reassessment may occur.
- x.) DEEWR has no evidence of this occurring.
- xi.) About 90% of SWS employees are enrolled with a Disability Employment Network provider.