



Australian Government

Workplace Authority

Evaluation Report

Employer Advisor Programme: Phase 3

June 2008

EAP PHASE 3 EVALUATION REPORT

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Terms of Reference

Title of Measure: Work Choices Employer Advisor Programme ('the Programme')

Affected Agencies: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations ('the Department'), The Workplace Authority

Resourcing: The Department was allocated funding of \$20.443 million for continuation of the EAP from 1 January until 31 December 2007. These funds were allocated to the extension of Phase 2 (January to March 2007) and Phase 3 (April to December 2007).

Cost	Phase 2 extension Expenditure	Phase 3 Expenditure
Contracts	\$ 4.028m	\$11.663m
Administration costs (ASL etc)	\$ 0.135m	\$1.040m
TOTAL	\$4.163m	\$12.703

**All contract values are exclusive of GST*

Outline of the Measure: The Programme was initiated as a pilot in January 2006 to support and complement workplace relations reform education activities. The pilot concluded on 30 June 2006. A second phase of programme service delivery commenced on 15 September 2006 which concluded on 15 December 2006. The second phase was extended for a further 2 months of service delivery from 30 January until 31 March 2007. On 27 March 2007 a Standing Panel of Providers was established to provide further EAP services for up to three years with the initial third phase of delivery from April until December 2007. The programme concluded on 31 December 2007.

Programme Objective: The objective of the programme was to develop a national network of industry-based advisors with the capacity and credibility to deliver advice, training and information on the workplace relations reforms.

Impact: The programme provided a significant role in facilitating the educative process for implementation of the workplace relations reforms. From June 2007, the EAP was the sole channel by which government was delivering public education services of this nature.

Coordination: The Programme was coordinated with other key workplace relations reform communication activities, including the Agreement-making Partnership Programme and broader activities undertaken by the Department.

Outline of the Review: This evaluation provides a brief review on the extension of Phase 2 activities (from January to March 2007) and a consolidated and comprehensive review of Phase 3 of the programme (from April to December 2007). Recommendations outlined in the Evaluation Report on Phase 2 completed in April 2007 will be considered in this review.

Methodology: This evaluation was undertaken by the Workplace Authority's Client Services ACT which was responsible for the administration and management of the Programme, with reference to programme evaluation guidelines. Information was drawn together from a number of different sources including: data collected from providers in weekly and final reports, event attendee surveys and

questionnaires, review of education products, and desk top review of literature and information. This report is limited to brief statistics of the Phase 2 extension and a full evaluation of Phase 3 of the Programme. It does not include other education activities developed or funded, including under other programmes by DEWR.

This evaluation is based on information and data valid as at 29 April 2008. Any changes, alterations or omissions to information recorded and compiled since this date has not be validated or included.

Executive Summary

Background

In response to the introduction of the workplace reforms announced in May 2005 by the Prime Minister, the Employer Advisor Programme ('the Programme') was initiated as a pilot in January 2006 to support the broader Work Choices communication activities. Seventeen organisations ('providers') were selected via an open tender process to establish a national network of industry-based advisors with the capacity and credibility to deliver advice, training and information on the Work Choices reforms.

On 22 June 2006, the Prime Minister agreed to extend the Programme (Phase 2) until 30 December 2006. As a result of a further tender process an additional 17 providers were selected to deliver services between September 2006 and December 2006.

A further \$20.443 million was allocated by the Prime Minister in December 2006 for the programme's continuation in 2007. The second phase was extended until March 2007 while, as a result of a final tender process, a Standing Panel of Providers was established to deliver the third phase of the programme.

This document reports briefly on the delivery of Phase 2 extension events and is a comprehensive evaluation of Phase 3 of the programme.

Key Findings

At the completion of the third phase of the programme on 31 December 2007, key findings are:

- The third phase of the EAP was delivered by 23¹ providers, representing 10 key industry sectors.
- A total of 1,297 public education services (seminars and workshops/clinics) were delivered nationally to an estimated audience of 13,613 attendees. In addition 4,100 consultations were conducted with 6,042 participants.
- 47% of education services occurred in regional and remote Australia.
- Increased focus on specific client groups such as youth, women, indigenous and small businesses enabled these audiences to receive assistance through a range of targeted education activities and products.
- A greater component of education activity in Phase 3 was conducted in either one-on-one consultations or through smaller workshops and clinics to enable a greater depth of understanding and application to specific business situations.
- Feedback on the programme from attendees was consistently positive as many more participants reported they were more familiar with the detail of the legislative changes since Work Choices commenced.
- The total cost of the programme was \$12.703 million. This is comprised of \$11.663 million on contract expenditure and \$1.040 million for administration costs.

¹ Includes ClubsAustralia contracted under extension of phase 2 arrangements in addition to all Standing Panel of providers

- Cost per participant was \$593 per participant which is an increase in comparison to Phase 2 at \$333 per participant and \$286 per person in Phase 1. This increase is indicative of the higher ratio of services to small groups of/or individual participants which was the intent of the programme in Phase 3.
- Delivery of the final stages of the EAP was impacted by the federal election in that providers suspended their advertising and some education activities due to caretaker restrictions resulting in a reduced delivery of programme activities. As a result of this, final payments reflected 93% of the original contracted amounts.

Conclusion

Phase 3 of the EAP implemented all of the recommendations detailed within the Phase 2 Report within the programme delivery. Overall, it successfully achieved its objectives as outlined in the EAP tender's Statement of Requirement to deliver education to Australian workplaces on workplace reforms. However the political climate of pre-election did reduce the demand for education services in the final weeks prior to the election.

Phase 3 of the EAP was the final phase of the programme with its official closure on 31 December 2007.

Phase 2 extension

Most providers who were contracted under Phase 2 arrangements were offered short extensions to their Phase 2 contracts due to complete at the end of December 2006. These extensions, which operated from the end of January till the end of March 2007, enabled providers to maintain momentum with their clients and helped to ensure there was some continuity with their clients while plans for Phase 3 commenced.

Total funding for Phase 2 extension was \$4.028m for contract expenditure and \$.135m on administrative costs.

A total number of 2,470 education events were delivered to 9,603 participants during Phase 2 extension. For further details of the Phase 2 extension provider's contract details and programme deliverables refer to **Attachment A**.

Programme Evaluation – Phase 3

The EAP established a national network of industry advisors who provided services to educate and assist employers and employees about the changes to the workplace relations system. By drawing on their business, jurisdictional and industry knowledge providers focussed on specific applications of the workplace reforms in their education activities.

Phase 3 Rollout

In December 2006 a third phase of the programme was announced by Minister Hockey by means of a new tender process initiated to establish a Standing Panel of Providers. The Panel was to operate for a period of up to three years with an initial purchase of services up to and including December 2007.

Successful providers were required to develop and deliver a suite of education products and services which included (but was not restricted to) one, some or all of the following:

1. Industry, sector or client specific conferences or seminars, information products and services
2. Workshops, briefings or clinics for small to medium business
3. Mentoring, on-site visits and or/one-on-one consultations for employers and employees
4. Practical tools and resources including tutorial or self help options for employers and employees, and materials for employers to provide to employees
5. Information resources and/or support services tailored for specific industry, sector or client groups including but not restricted to:
 - those from non-English speaking backgrounds, indigenous communities
 - people with disability
 - youth
 - mature aged workers
 - women in the workforce
 - small, incorporated business or small and new business considering incorporation
 - businesses operating from partnerships and trusts considering incorporation and/or
 - those in isolated and remote areas.

The intent of EAP phase 3 was to target audiences of employers and employees throughout Australia who were small and small to medium businesses, industry and/or sector groups and the groups listed in item 5 above.

A total of 22 providers were successfully appointed to the Standing Panel of Providers on 27 March 2007. Phase 3 providers, their contract details and expenditure are listed at **Attachment B**. In addition to the Standing Panel, a contract was extended with ClubsAustralia to update their materials under the extension provisions of their Phase 2 contract.

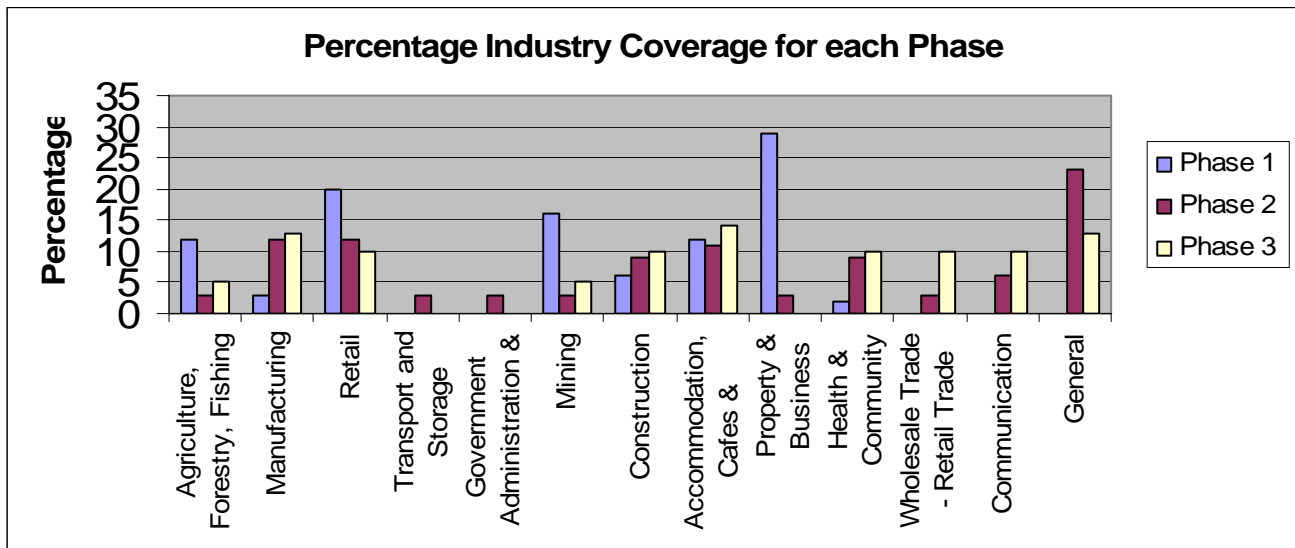
Phase 3 work orders were issued to 22 providers between April and July 2007 to the value of \$12.568 million. Two providers received additional work orders (combined total value of \$236,000) - issued later in 2007 to meet gaps identified in their industries of construction and retail.

Industry Coverage and representation

The consultancy services of 23 providers were purchased for Phase 3 of the Programme to provide a broader industry sector representation and coverage.

Industry coverage and representation in Phase 3 is represented in the chart below. The significant difference in industry coverage and representation between Phase 3 and previous phases was an increase in representation in Wholesale Trade – Retail Trade and Communications along with a decrease in General category.

Industry coverage and representation



Education Services

The scope of services in Phase 3 of the EAP centred on an approach of building on education services provided in previous EAP phases. Phase 2 activities added to the initial broader first phase of education services of public seminars by including more workshops, clinics and one-on-one consultations and practical applications of the workplace reforms.

The EAP Phase 2 Evaluation Report (finalised June 2006) advised that several providers reported that employers had requested more practical assistance in future education activities with a strong industry focus on developing AWAs, employer collective agreements, recordkeeping, termination of employment and negotiation in the workplace.

While general information on the workplace reforms continued to be offered in Phase 3, the scope of services accommodated the need for more practical assistance by significantly increasing the component of workshops and clinics with fewer attendees; and more tailored one-on-one consultations and focussing on the topics listed in the previous paragraph. Phase 3 also included a focus on specific client groups and more industry-based tools and products.

All providers were required to submit a strategy (based on their response to the tender) outlining the details of the educational services they wish to provide. Prior to these strategies being approved, the Workplace Authority negotiated with all providers with the aim of ensuring value for money, the best coverage across geography, client and industry groups and to maximise the objectives of the programme.

A schedule of proposed events by providers was submitted to the Department for approval prior to these events being advertised on the DEWR web site in their events management system. The approval of these schedules was based on confirmation that they did not clash with other EAP events in specific areas especially in regional towns or locations. Likewise, if the events represented the same industry but two different providers in a regional area, adjustments were requested to these schedules. The aim of this exercise was to maximise the attendances for all providers by avoiding saturation in specific areas.

Seminars

Seminars provided a more general overview of workplace relations in Australia. While some providers offered industry specific information, the majority of information delivered in seminars was broad in nature. While fewer seminars were offered during this phase, they still attracted a reasonable number of participants and attendee feedback confirmed that a need still existed for general and overview information.

One provider representing the mining industry conducted six internet seminars which attracted 120 participants. Perhaps the most notable feedback was the positive response from those participants in remote sites/ locations who weren't able to attend traditional seminars in person – they appreciated the ability to participate in a topical session and have queries answered immediately.

Workshops and clinics

Interactive workshops and clinics included more detailed and specific applications of the workplace reforms. By working through real situations and scenarios with attendees, participants were better equipped to determine what the reforms meant practically for their business and their employees and how to implement the desired changes in their business.

Many interactive workshops were topic-based and included topics of agreement-making, negotiation in the workplace, 'how to incorporate', performance management, flexible employment and family-friendly policies in the workplace. Audiences targeted through the workshops and clinics included small business, employees and youth through new entrants to the workforce (school and university leavers), women and indigenous groups.

Other innovative public education activities included business lunches targeted at CEO and HR managers, and senior staff surveys to determine the link between industry employment conditions and organisational people strategies.

In Phase 3 a total of 1,297 public education events (including seminars, workshops and clinics) were delivered to 13,613 participants. This equated to an average of 10.5 participants per event. In that over 1,000 of these events were smaller workshops or clinics rather than large seminars, this attendee average may be considered as appropriate for this style of education event. Approximately 47% of events were delivered in regional areas while approximately 53% being delivered in metropolitan areas nationally throughout Australia.

Consultations

Phase 3 of the Programme saw a significant increase in the type and number of consultation services offered with all but one provider delivering this service. This is in response to recommendations from the Phase 2 findings which advised that there was a continuing strong demand for these types of services.

Consultations were conducted in various ways including face-to-face or via the telephone, and could be held at a business site or a provider's premises or another mutually agreed location. They also included in most cases, an 'after hours' option to assist time-poor businesses. Feedback from attendees confirms that this flexibility in service was appreciated and made the difference in them being able to participate.

The nature of consultations also differed across providers with some opting to provide topic-specific assistance such as working through an agreement-making process while others left the topic up to the attendee (provided it was within the scope of the programme) tailoring the event to suit the client's specific situation and need. Consultations varied in length with the most common being approximately

an hour but sometimes these were up to three or four hours in length. It was not unusual for providers to conduct an initial and several follow up consultations to the same client. These sessions were available to either individuals or to multiple (but usually no more than three) participants. Other providers found it easier to deliver a set number of mentoring hours to meet the variable needs across businesses.

In Phase 3 a total of 4,100 consultations were held with 6,042 participants nationally on a request basis. (This included mentoring hours on the basis of one mentoring hour equalling one consultation).

Phase 3 Number of events and event type for each state										
Events Type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Seminars	4	59	17	36	31	10	22	30		209
Workshops	15	229	35	310	130	89	158	106		1,072
Consultations	157	941	47	1328	402	189	815	221		4,100
Teleseminar/online									8	8
Breakfast Briefing		1					1			2
Luncheon		1		1	1	1	1	1		6
										5,397
Phase 3 Number of attendees for each event type by state										
Events Type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	NATIONAL	TOTAL
Seminars/workshops *	188	3066	299	3715	2286	572	2120	957		13,203
Consultations	217	1369	52	2113	636	285	1053	317		6,042
Teleseminar/online									137	137
Breakfast Briefing		18					13			31
Luncheon		44		30	33	22	35	78		242
										19,655
* Providers did not differentiate in their weekly reports between seminars and workshops										

Case Studies

An additional aspect of Phase 3 was the requirement of providers to document feedback from their own observations and from attendees. The intent of this activity was to formally identify trends and examples of practical applications of best practice of the workplace reforms for use in future governmental education material.

Each provider was contractually required to develop a defined number of case studies that provided examples of best practice preferably with an emphasis on positive outcomes as a result of agreement making. The required number varied depending on the quantity of the deliverables and subsequent contract value. While the majority of providers (19) were required to refer five organisations as case studies, the three largest providers who had a greater number of deliverables and higher contract values were required to deliver between ten and twenty referrals each.

Typical EAP education programmes involved providers firstly conducting a number of seminars and/or workshops where opportunities to conduct consultations were promoted. Case studies were usually identified following these consultations as the result of the provider and participant having worked through the addressed attendee's individual situation. For this reason, many of the case study referrals were not identifiable until later in the delivery programme of each provider. Providers also encountered a reluctance of their clients to be referred and identified as a case study which made this requirement difficult for many providers.

By the onset of the caretaker period in October 2007 when all activities related to identifying case studies were suspended, a total of 35 organisations had agreed to provide their details for possible case studies. Of these, accommodation, hospitality, retail, building and construction were well represented industries with a greater component being sourced in Queensland and NSW.

Education products

EAP Phase 3 involved the development of a wide range of education products with many tailored to specific industries and audiences. All but one provider had been involved in previous EAP activity and all of these redeveloped their existing materials to reflect the latest legislative changes on the Fairness Test. In addition to this 20 providers developed a wide range of new products to support their education activities.

Revised and new products developed in Phase 3 included PowerPoint presentations (50). Of these

- 16 presentations were on agreement making
- 15 presentations were on general workplace relations
- 19 presentations on other topics such as managing your workforce, flexible employment, unions, termination of employment, indigenous programmes, incorporation

Other items included checklists, case studies, scenarios and fact sheets (165) which were specifically targeted to meet the needs of the relevant industry. Also developed were workbooks or handbooks (12) providing information such as 'Step by step guide to AWAs, Essential workplace relations and 'Negotiation in the workplace' (training course)'. One model collective agreement was also developed for the pharmacy industry.

New products also included:

- 'New entrant to the workforce kit' including information for school leavers and resources for teachers.
- Guide to employee engagement for HR staff
- Report on the hospitality industry including recruitment and labour trends as the result of research activity by the provider.

All products developed under the EAP were deemed to be Commonwealth material upon their creation. Following the closure of the programme, providers were requested to send back any excess copies of their developed products. The Workplace Authority has kept several copies of each product used in Phase 3.

Quality of Education Services

Throughout the delivery period of Phase 3 public education events held by providers were regularly reviewed for quality assurance and to gauge effectiveness of their programme delivery. With the exception of one provider who completed their public events very early in the programme all providers had at least one, but mostly two events audited by a contract manager or a workplace advisor. This equated to a total of 35 public events officially reviewed.

A standard template was provided to reviewers to rate the quality and effectiveness of the event which also provided intelligence on hot and contentious topics. As a result of the reviews the vast majority of reviewers either 'agreed or 'strongly agreed' that:

- the attitude of the presenter was positive and supportive to the workplace reforms and did not tout for business throughout the presentation

- the educational material used was cleared material with the government's branding
- industry relevant information and examples were used to help understand the application of the reforms to the attendee's industry
- the presenter had high quality professional presentation skills, inviting and responding to questions appropriately.

Where issues were identified as a result of the audits these were promptly addressed by the Workplace Authority and measures taken with the provider to rectify the problems. Issues included some reviewers experiencing difficulty in registering for events and in one case the use of uncleared material. Only one event was rated as poor and this was managed promptly with a face-to-face meeting with the provider.

Providers were also required to submit weekly reports on their events which were combined and submitted to the Minister's Office every week. The reporting template included provision for individual feedback from attendees and/or providers on aspects of the programme delivery. The majority of providers completed this feedback data consistently, however some providers found the reporting requirements onerous and difficult due to the logistics of reporting on the programme while they were in the field delivering the programme. Providers reported that the average percentage of feedback forms received back from event attendees was 61%. Overall, these reporting aspects helped to ensure that providers' performance was monitored and issues addressed promptly by contract managers.

Evaluation of consultations

Because the nature of a consultation is a personal interview it was not viable for privacy reasons for the Workplace Authority to attend any of these for the purpose of evaluation and assessment. However a number of processes were put in place to enable some evaluation to take place.

Providers were requested to provide attendees with a feedback sheet which was optional for the consultation participant to fax back to either the Workplace Authority or to the provider to forward to the Authority. Providers were also advised early in the programme that 10% of attendees would be surveyed using a random sample of consultation participants with a further 10% to be surveyed by the provider. With the occurrence of most consultations falling towards the end of the programme, this activity did not commence because the Federal election was called and caretaker restrictions were imposed.

Marketing Strategies undertaken by providers

All providers used a range of marketing strategies to promote their Phase 3 education events and services. These strategies included utilising a mix of at least two of the following channels:

- print media advertising including newspaper and/or industry magazines
- industry member mail outs, emails and/or fax streams
- media releases
- promotion through their websites
- radio
- small component of television, and
- telemarketing.

Prior to the execution of work orders all marketing strategies were reviewed and changes requested by DEWR or the Workplace Authority. The intent of these changes was to improve their proposed reach to specific audiences such as to youth or women but also to ensure that non-members and employees were targeted.

Most providers utilised their websites to advertise their events and these were reviewed by the Workplace Authority regularly throughout the programme for quality assurance and to ensure promotional activity was within the contractual requirements.

All promotional products were dual branded with logos of both the provider and the Workplace Authority and then submitted to the Authority for review and clearance by the communications team. While many concepts and ideas were adequate, a number of these needed significant revision to improve the language and align to Government style.

Where attendance levels were down, providers regularly adjusted their marketing strategies to address these problems and improve their outcomes. This often included implementing telemarketing activity prior to an event to both confirm registrations and to maximise actual attendance, or to boost registrations. Many providers advised this was mostly successful in the earlier period of the programme but had minimal success closer to the impending federal election.

Cost

The total cost of the programme was \$12.703 million. This is comprised of \$11.663 million on contract expenditure and \$1.040 million for administration costs. This included additional funding during Phase 3 provided to two organisations to meet changing industry needs.

Cost per participant is \$593 which is a significant increase in comparison to Phase 2 at \$333 per participant and \$286 per person in Phase 1. This increase reflects the higher ratio of services to small groups and/or individual participants in comparison to previous phases.

Final total provider payments were 92% of the contract values. This compares to 97% in Phase 2 and 95% in Phase 3. This final figure of reduced expenditure was attributable to the declining demand for education services immediately prior to the federal election in addition to the imposition of advertising restrictions during the caretaker period.

Administrative costs (comprised mostly of legal fees, staffing, travel and incidentals). Legal costs for Phase 3 totalled \$282,152 clearing a total number of approximately 230 products.

Excluding legal fees, the costs for administering the contracts is approximately 73 % of the total administrative costs.

Findings

The main goal of the EAP Phase 3 was to develop a national network of industry-based advisors with the capacity and credibility to deliver advice, training and information on the Work Choices reforms and provide information to Australian workplaces on how they can best utilise the benefits and flexibilities under the system.

A delivery strategy was approved in January 2007 to support the delivery of the programme in Phase 3. To determine how well EAP Phase 3 achieved its goal, this section considers the findings against the **Critical Success Factors (CSF)** as outlined in the EAP delivery strategy.

1. **Industry focus:** Information, education, training and advice on Work Choices is relevant and specific for application to industry
2. **Industry reach:** Service delivery caters to the broadest audience by the most efficient and effective options/and/or resource models
3. **Trusted access:** Information, and training on Work Choices is from a reliable and credible source, which has the government's imprimatur, and generates and instils confidence in employers and employees
4. **Market intelligence:** emerging advice trend, influences and/or issues are identified and captured to better inform delivery of services demonstrate collective benefits and /or industry best practice, and
5. **Communication:** The broader Work Choices communication activities of the Department and relevant agencies are promoted in a coordinated, consistent and coherent manner.

Political factors

Uncertainty and considerable change in the political environment during 2007 impacted the programme to a significant degree. In May 2007, the issue of work orders were delayed for several weeks due to the impending announcement of the new Safety Net legislation. This delay required many providers to revise their programme timelines and for some, this affected the effectiveness of their overall programme and the timeliness of their product development. In addition, many providers reported that the pre-election and caretaker period in October impacted the audience receptiveness to education activities with many potential participants opting to 'wait and see what the election brings'.

As a result of the political environment, most of Phase 3 providers were not able to deliver the full component of their contracted programme. Once the federal election date was announced all advertising of events was suspended and following the change of government minimal events actually occurred. Despite these complications overall, EAP providers delivered a high quality education programme.

Industry Coverage and representation

Phase 3 of the EAP continued to provide broad coverage of EAP education services across a range of general and specific industries delivering well against *CSF 1 'Industry Focus'*.

With the exception of one organisation all EAP providers on the Standing Panel had been involved in previous phases of the programme. As a result, the industry coverage continued to build on efforts in earlier phases of the programme, providing a more practical application of workplace reforms using industry-specific scenarios and individual business's circumstances.

As the only new provider in the programme in Phase 3, the Council of Small Business Association of Australia delivered education on the topic of incorporation to the small business sector. This was warmly received by this sector with 90% of event attendees stating their workplace relations knowledge increased “somewhat to significantly”.

Effectiveness of Education Services: Seminars, workshops and consultations

Targeted audiences

Providers continued to deliver professional services to a broad audience and extend their audience reach to a range of specific client groups, meeting *CSF 2 – ‘Industry Reach’* to a high degree. Client groups targeted in this phase included an increased focus on assisting employees in addition to employers, vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous and youth (school leavers).

Where a provider’s audience included industries and sectors which these vulnerable client groups could be identified, these work orders were revised by the Workplace Authority prior to being signed to ensure that their programme of activities and products maximised the reach to the identified client group.

Examples of these included producing employee-focussed fact sheets for employers to distribute to their employees, new entrant to the workforce resource kit and indigenous presentations. Employee briefings were scheduled by the Chamber Alliance group but few of these were conducted due to imposition of caretaker period restrictions.

Advertising methods used also included attracting non-members of their organisation. While not all providers captured these statistics, the majority of providers indicated a higher representation of non-members participating in their programme. Of those that did capture this information several reported over 50% non-member participation.

Due to the changing political climate, some providers periodically requested changes to their work orders to vary their deliverables slightly with the aim of improving outcomes to best suit the needs of their industry. All variations that provided a more efficient and effective mechanism was approved and as a result these outcomes were improved.

Seminars

Despite the fact that there were fewer seminars over Phase 3 of the programme (217), general information and topic based seminars were still well attended. Final data on attendee numbers were generally reported holistically with attendee numbers from other public education events such as workshops.

Of these seminars, six were virtual internet seminars which proved popular with an average of 20 participants each. Participants in remote locations who weren’t able to attend seminars in person advised their appreciation of having their queries answered immediately.

Workshops

Topic and industry-based workshops grew in popularity this phase with many providers advising that their participants considered this style of public event was one of the most effective way to help them understand the reforms. Many workshops involved the practical aspects of agreement-making utilising

scenarios and live cases to work through the process. Other topics such as negotiation in the workplace, family friendly and flexible employment provided helpful training and support on how to implement the workplace relations reforms.

While it was sometimes difficult for providers to secure registrations due to the time and staffing pressures on small business, feedback from attendees as well as audits conducted by Workplace Authority staff confirm that topic-based and industry focussed workshops were warmly received. During Phase 1 and 2 of the programme many attendees had been unaware of their obligations in relation to workplace reforms. This was still evident to some degree in Phase 3 where the majority while being more aware, were seeking help on how to best implement the reforms by commencing agreement making processes with their staff.

Other

Other events new in Phase 3 were six briefing luncheons for CEOs and HR practitioners in the mining industry. These were highly popular and were often fully booked with an average of over 40 participants. They were also rated very highly by participants.

A 'people project' involving survey activity for hospitality sector managers provided findings in relation to trends in workforce mapping and the influence of employment conditions on the hospitality and hotel business.

Consultations

Following recommendations from previous phases a greater number of one-on-one consultations were incorporated into Phase 3. This enabled businesses to consider how the workplace reforms impacted their specific circumstances and to plan their workplace arrangements accordingly.

With 4,100 consultations conducted with 6,042 participants in Phase 3, this is considerably more when compared to Phase 2 (till the end of 2006) at 1,837 consultations to 2,890 phases. While other models may have provided increased cost effectiveness with a broader reach, consultations have provided the much needed practical application of the workplace reforms and improved understanding.

Case Studies

The contractual requirement of providers to refer a set number of case studies was significantly impacted by the announcement of the federal election. *CSF 4 'Market intelligence'* is associated with the requirement of providers identifying emerging trends, industry influences and industry best practice. The intent of the case study component of the contract was to produce data and intelligence along these lines.

While 35 organisations had agreed that their workplace situations could be considered as examples of best practice in workplace reform, up to 50 organisations were referred to the Workplace Authority as potential case studies. The commencement of the caretaker period did not enable fruition of these referrals or further activity to produce fully detailed case studies.

While providers reported a general reluctance of their clients to agree to be part of this project, the reported number of case studies submitted increased significantly prior to the caretaker period. This improvement was more indicative of the nature of the delivery cycle of the programme, with many case studies identified from individual businesses which tended to occur at the end of the programme. Many

of the smaller providers were close to achieving their projected numbers when this activity was suspended.

As no monetary component was attached to this deliverable, providers were not financially penalised for not producing the full quota of case studies.

Effectiveness of education products

The educational products developed under Phase 3 of the EAP were required to be cleared for legal accuracy through the DEWR panel of legal firms. They were also checked for quality from a communications perspective by either the DEWR or Workplace Authority communications for consistency in key messages and alignment to corporate branding and style. These clearance processes ensured that the education products satisfied the requirements of the *CSF 3 'Trusted Access'* of reliability and Government imprimatur.

Feedback from legal firms suggested that generally the first drafts of uncleared material submitted to them for clearance was of a reasonably high quality but still required substantial changes. Exceptions to this were instances where products were developed for specific client groups such as the 'New entrant to the Workforce' kits, and educational material for indigenous audiences. In this case the provider demonstrated little expertise in tailoring their products for these audiences requiring substantial input by the Workplace Authority to achieve a high quality plain English product that the audiences could relate to. Unfortunately these products were only used minimally as the delivery of these activities was curtailed by the election being called and subsequently suspended.

In the event of future education activities, it is strongly recommended that if specific client groups are targeted that the Authority develops a concept brief and work with the provider to ensure that the product is well aligned to the needs of the audience. Alternatively, these products should be developed in-house by the Workplace Authority.

Effectiveness of marketing

In light of the volatility of the political environment (just prior to an election) providers utilised a wide range and mix of marketing activities to maximise interest in their events for Phase 3.

Generally, direct marketing either through email alerts, mail outs or fax streams to members continued to be most effective way to promote the programme. Direct phone contact, although more time consuming was also a valuable mechanism with a more personal touch to build and confirm registration numbers.

As there was a requirement to ensure that marketing efforts were targeted beyond providers' membership, other avenues such as advertising in general press and industry magazines was utilised to some degree. While this worked for some providers this medium was not thought to be as cost effective for comparable results.

Radio advertising was used by three providers and for most this was somewhat effective. One provider used television but did not achieve good results via this channel. Another innovative method used was to cold call small businesses in a town prior to an event to raise awareness and registration levels. This would have been more successful in this instance if the events were held after-hours which was common for most providers.

In a sample of data from attendee feedback, attendees claimed that the provider websites were the main lead source for learning about the events offered. However, provider reports indicate that this was not the case, so it is likely that attendees were directed to the provider's website following the initial marketing channel of email, mail outs, fax streams or press advertising.

Overall, the best approach was to utilise a marketing mix of several channels, with additional phone contact to improve numbers or confirm registrations.

Having completed this type of activity in previous phases, most providers were well informed about what works well in their industry and for their audience. Towards the latter few months of the programme with the federal election imminent and the requirement of no advertising during the caretaker period, interest in events and consultations dropped significantly. While providers adjusted their marketing strategies, most providers experienced an inability to deliver their programme in full.

Co-ordination of communication activities

The intent of the final *CSF 6 – 'Communication'* of the evaluation of phase 3 was to co-ordinate the communication activities of the Authority across portfolio agencies to ensure consistency of message.

With the commencement of the Workplace Authority, the management of the EAP programme was transferred from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to the Authority in the very early stages of Phase 3. From June 2007, DEWR did not continue to conduct any education activities. However, open communication with DEWR on key messages was maintained as they continued to maintain the function of providing communications clearances throughout most of Phase 3.

The other portfolio agency which was intended as relevant stakeholder - the Office of Employment Advocate - was merged into the new Workplace Authority in July 2007.

Value for Money

During Phase 3, the EAP reached approximately 19,655 employers and employees through education activities of some kind. The cost per participant of \$593 per participant is a significant increase in comparison to Phase 2 at \$333 per participant and \$286 per person in Phase 1. However, this increased cost per participant is to be expected when the intent of phase 3 was to provide a greater degree of individual assistance to small businesses.

Conclusion

The EAP continued to deliver a high quality education programme to Australian workplaces throughout its third phase of operation during a period of significant political uncertainty and; within the confines of the political environment it achieved its objectives. Feedback from attendees consistently indicated that many participants found the increased focus on providing smaller group workshops, consultations and mentoring to be very effective in helping employers and employees understand the practical application of the workplace legislation reforms.

The programme officially closed on 31 December 2007.

Recommendations

As the Employer Advisor Programme has officially closed and a change of government focuses on new workplace relations policies, recommendations are limited to generic findings that are applicable to future education activities and programmes in workplace reform.

In the event that the Workplace Authority undertakes future education activities it is recommended that:

- If educational or innovative products are to be developed for specific client groups, the Workplace Authority should be closely involved in their development from the concept to completion. Alternatively, these should be developed by the Workplace Authority to maximise the consistency of key messages and ensure the language is audience-friendly and targeted.
- The EAP final reports submitted by individual providers are used to provide some intelligence and data on trends in workplace reforms across specific industries.

Attachment A - Phase 2 Extension

Provider contract details – Phase 2

Provider	Industry	Coverage	Educational Services	Educational Products	Expenditure (GST ex)
ACT Chamber of Commerce Industry	General	ACT, Southern NSW	8 seminars 110.75 hrs consultation	Seminar workbook including Powerpoint Fact Sheets 'How-to' guide	\$36,363.64
Aged & Community Services of Australia	Health and Community Services	NT, SA, TAS, VIC, WA	85 hrs consultation	Presentation workbook; award summaries; compliance checklist;	\$42,819.09
Aged & Community Services Ass NSW/ACT	Health and Community Services	NSW & ACT	4 seminars 60.8 hrs consultation	PowerPoint presentation Employee Information Statement How & when guide Employers Guide WorkChoices Information Guide Working Together CD	\$35,200.00
Australian Business Ltd (now NSW Business Chamber)	General	NSW, TAS, VIC	10 seminars	Powerpoint presentation; WorkChoices booklet	\$90,909.09
Australian Furniture Removers Association	Transport and Storage	National	6 seminars 14 consultations	Record keeping within the Removal Industry	\$39,050.00
Australian Hotels Association	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	40 seminars 20 consultations	Workbook; Fact Sheets; PowerPoint; 'Under WorkChoices you are covered handout	\$115,000.00
Australian industry Group	Manufacturing etc	NSW, QLD, NT, SA, TAS, VIC	10 workshops 310 consultations	Seminar Powerpoint presentation and workbook; Workplace consultation presentation and workbook; Compliance Q&A and presentation; newsletters	\$243,636.36
Australian Medical Association	Health and Community Services	National	22 seminars 33 workshops 15 consultations	Information article on WorkChoices; Information Guide	\$317,980.00
Australian Mines and Metals Association	Mining	National except ACT	42 seminars 14 workshops 60 consultations	PowerPoint presentations & handouts on Unions; Agreement Making; The Standard; WorkChoices for Managers	\$286,363.64

Provider	Industry	Coverage	Educational Services	Educational Products	Expenditure (GST ex)
Australian Newsagents' Federation	Retail	National	26 consultations	nil	\$249,409.09
Australian Retailers' Association	Retail	ACT, NSW, NT, SA, TAS, VIC	30 seminars 50 workshops	Retail WorkChoices booklet; Hair and Beauty WorkChoices booklet; Agreement making for Retailers CD ROM; Agreement making for Salons CD ROM	\$169,090.91
Business SA	General	SA	7 seminars 18 workshops 30 consultations	Powerpoint presentation on Benefits for Constitutional Corporations,; New Rules for Employment Records & Constitutional Corp-Tax	\$242,500.00
Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA	General	WA	8 seminars	Powerpoint presentation – Agreement Making Factsheets	\$21,818.18
Clubs Australia (inc Clubs NSW)	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	Nil	Update WorkChoices Handbooks; Clubs NSW Workplace Relations Transitional Handbooks inserts	\$85,893.64
Commerce Qld	General	QLD	10 seminars 40 workshops 254 consultations	Powerpoint handouts for seminars and workshops; 16 Industry Fact Sheets	\$418,109.09
Electrical Communications Association	Communication services	QLD	53 consultations	Fact sheets; sample AWA; presentation slides handout	\$19,730.00
Employment Advocacy Solution	General	QLD	2 workshops 80 consultations	Powerpoint presentation; 'The New IR Players' book; 'Working Together' DVD; case studies; electronic bulletins	\$169,136.36
Furnishing Industry Association of Australia	Manufacturing	ACT, NSW, SA	9 seminars 306 consultations	'Making an AWA' CD; Fact sheets folder; Powerpoint presentation handouts	\$145,636.36
Hotel, Motel and Accommodation Association	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	11 seminars	Handbook; Presentation notes; website	\$100,909.09
Housing Industry Australia	Construction	National	16 workshops	7 self help sheets; Guide to Employment Agreements; Powerpoint presentation	\$47,272.73

Provider	Industry	Coverage	Educational Services	Educational Products	Expenditure (GST ex)
Local Government of Queensland	Government Administration and Defence	QLD	15 seminars 27 workshops	DVD; Best Practice Guide; Fact Sheets; Agreement making Guide, PowerPoint	\$66,818.18
Master Builders Australia	Construction	National	11 workshops 6 consultations	10 Fact sheets; Scenario handouts; Template agreements; Powerpoint presentation	\$31,102.27
Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association of Australia	Construction	National	21 workshops 155 consultations	Workshop work packs (sent to all 'no show' registrations) including Fact sheets, workshop workbook; seminar workbook	\$409,090.91
National Electrical Communications Association	Communication services	ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC	19 seminars 81 consultations	Fact sheets; work booklets	\$101,645.45
National Farmers Federation	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	National except ACT	16 consultations	Booklet; CD ROM; newsletters	\$63,409.09
National Retail Association	Retail Trade	National	168.2 hr consultation	CD WorkChoices & Factsheets	\$80,313.64
Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce	General	NT	3 seminars	Presentation hand outs	\$5,454.55
Pharmacy Guild of Australia	Retail	National	5 seminars 4 workshops 21 hours consultation	Information kit including AWA templates, presentation notes, sample employment contracts and sample employment records.	\$136,363.64
Printing Industry Association of Australia	Manufacturing	National			\$13,723.69
Recruitment and Consulting Services Association	Property and Business Services	National	11 workshops	WorkChoices for the Employment Services Industry and 40 Questions for the Employment Services Industry handouts / online resources	\$45,227.27
Restaurant & Catering	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	14 seminars 90 consultations		\$55,818.18
SED Consulting Group	General	TAS, VIC	20 workshops	Workshop manual; Powerpoint presentation handout	\$95,000.00
Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce	Wholesale & retail trade	National	16 seminars 4 workshops	PowerPoint Presentation AWA Frameworks Fact Sheets	\$48,181.82

Attachment B - Phase 3

Provider Contract Details (Phase 3)

Provider	Industry	Coverage	Educational Services	Educational Products	Expenditure (GST ex)
ACT Chamber of Commerce Industry	General	ACT, Southern NSW	10 workshops 151 consultations	Seminar workbook including Powerpoint Fact Sheets 'How-to' guide	\$160,000.00
Aged & Community Services of Australia	Health and Community Services	NT, SA, TAS, VIC, WA	43 workshops 142.5 hrs consultations	Presentation workbook; award summaries; Powerpoint presentations x2	\$308,783.50
Australian Chamber Alliance	General	National	155 Seminars 299 workshops 91 employee briefings 1329 consultations 130 school briefings	Powerpoint presentations & workbooks	\$4,640,843.50
Australian Hotels Association	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	30 workshops 50 consultations	Workbook; Fact Sheets; PowerPoint presentations; 'Under WorkChoices you are covered handout, survey & report	\$147,200.00
Australian industry Group	Manufacturing etc	NSW, QLD, NT, SA, TAS, VIC	40 workshops 705 consultations	Powerpoint presentations and workbook;	\$1,260,250.00
Australian Medical Association	Health and Community Services	National	7 seminars 48 workshops 197 consultations	PowerPoint presentations & booklet, Guide to Workplace Relations	\$489,850.70
Australian Mines and Metals Association	Mining	National except ACT	6 internet seminars 6 Decision makers luncheons 6 seminars 460 hrs consultations	PowerPoint presentations & handouts on Case studies, Employee Engagement Paper	\$506,869.34
Australian Retailers' Association	Retail	ACT, NSW, NT, SA, TAS, VIC	134 seminars 128 consultations	Retail WorkChoices booklet; Hair and Beauty WorkChoices booklet; Agreement making for Retailers CD ROM; Agreement making for Salons CD ROM	\$718,198.54

Provider	Industry	Coverage	Educational Services	Educational Products	Expenditure (GST ex)
Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia	General	National	28 workshops	PowerPoint presentation	\$164,617.27
Clubs Australia (inc Clubs NSW)	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	Nil	Update WorkChoices Handbooks distributed in previous phases	\$60,509.10
Electrical Communications Association	Communication services	QLD, ACT	8 Workshops 43 consultations	PowerPoint Presentation Generic industrial agreements Workbook CD	\$65,623.39
Furnishing Industry Association of Australia	Manufacturing	ACT, NSW, SA	16 workshops 304 consultations	PowerPoint Presentation, fact sheets	\$167,490.90
Hotel, Motel and Accommodation Association	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	170 consultations	CD, workbook, checklists, framework AWA	\$165,000.00
Housing Industry Australia	Construction	National	35 workshops 75 consultations	Industry Guide, PowerPoint presentation, handout	\$468,573.41
Master Builders Australia	Construction	National	83 workshops 234 consultations	Fact sheets, guidance notes, best practice guides, PowerPoint presentations, scenarios	\$324,267.25
National Electrical Communications Association	Communication services	ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC	5 seminars 19 workshops 62 consultations	Fact sheets; work booklets	\$143,189.09
National Farmers Federation	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	National except ACT	5 seminars 38 workshops 95 consultations 2 briefings	Booklet and workbooks to support presentation, PowerPoint presentations	\$509,614.00
National Retail Association	Retail Trade	National	25 workshops 767.3 hrs consultations	PowerPoint Presentation	\$318,744.77
Pharmacy Guild of Australia	Retail	National	18 workshops 70 consultation 70 follow-up consultations	Model collective agreement for all states and territories, PowerPoint Presentation	\$509,543.80
Printing Industry Association of Australia	Manufacturing	National	85 consultations	No products	\$40,800.61
Recruitment and Consulting Services Association	Property and Business Services	National	12 seminars 12 workshops 4 briefings	PowerPoint Presentation, Guide	\$141,000.00

Provider	Industry	Coverage	Educational Services	Educational Products	Expenditure (GST ex)
Restaurant & Catering Industry Association	Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	National	49 seminars 360 consultations	Fact sheets, PowerPoint presentation, workshops manual	\$188,090.91
Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce	Wholesale & retail trade	National	27 seminars 28 workshops 100 consultations	PowerPoint Presentations AWA Frameworks Fact Sheets	\$164,700.00