

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome 5

DEEWR Question No. EW0304_10

Senator Xenophon asked on 2 June 2009 EEWHR Hansard page 108.

Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman – Establishment of a specialist education unit for small and medium enterprises

Question

Has consideration been given to the definition of a medium-sized enterprise? Further to that, how will this unit work? Clearly, it will offer telephone advice— you have alluded to that. Will it also offer any advocacy assistance to small and medium-sized businesses?

Answer

The Department has not given consideration to a definition for medium sized enterprises, however the Australian Bureau of Statistics defines medium sized enterprises as businesses employing 20 or more people, but less than 200.

The Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman (OFWO) will develop guidelines for its Small Business Education Unit, with a preference for a flexible definition rather than strict limits.

The Small Business Education Unit employs five education officers. The Small Business Education Unit will provide a specialist service to small and medium sized businesses which seek advice and assistance via the Fair Work website or Infoline. It will develop and provide tools, information and services (such as Fair Work Education and Information seminars) to address the specific education needs of small to medium sized businesses.

The Small Business Education Unit will not provide advocacy services to small and medium sized businesses, but will refer employers seeking advocacy assistance to organisations offering specialised services or free legal advice such as employer organisations or JobWatch (Victoria).