

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 4 – Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0309_13

Senator Abetz asked on 29 May 2012 , Hansard page 117

Question

Appointment of members to Fair Work tribunal

Senator ABETZ: The chances are that we have a differing definition of what the appropriate occasion is. I turn now to the appointment of members to the fair work tribunal. What liaison and what advice occurred in the appointment of one Mr Reardon? It just seemed very serendipitous that Mr Reardon happened to settle his outstanding \$1.8 million lawsuit with the Electrical Trades Union the very day before Mr Shorten made the announcement of his appointment as a commissioner of Fair Work Australia. Is the department able to advise as to whether the minister contacted Mr Reardon in relation to this outstanding legal matter? Mr Kovacic: I would have to take that on notice. I am not aware of whether— Senator ABETZ: Parliamentary Secretary, are you aware from your internal ministry discussions or whatever whether the minister had discussions with Mr Reardon about his legal matters? Senator Jacinta Collins: I am not aware, so I will take that on notice. I should indicate that I was actually representing the Commonwealth at the swearing in of a new member, but I am not aware of the question you ask.

Answer

Following a merit selection process, six appointments were made by the Governor-General to Fair Work Australia (FWA) on 24 February 2012, including that of Mr Bernie Riordan as a Commissioner.

As part of the due diligence process undertaken regarding all proposed appointments, Mr Riordan disclosed his involvement in the civil matter concerning the Electrical Trades Union that was before the Federal Court. That information was included in briefing to the Minister during the appointment process.