

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

**2005-2006 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING
2 and 3 NOVEMBER 2005**

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS PORTFOLIO

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

OFFICE OF THE EMPLOYMENT ADVOCATE

Question Number: W558-06

Question:

Senator Marshall asked in writing:

According to page 7 of the OEA Annual Report 2004/5, the OEA utilises market research, primarily the annual Client Services Survey, to measure some aspects of performance against the strategic plan and Client Service Charter. Due to changes in scope and sample design, care should be taken in comparing estimates from the 2004-05 Client Services Survey to estimates from previous years and other OEA research:

- (a) Can the OEA please detail the ways in which the scope and sample design of the Client Services Survey were altered for 2004/5?
- (b) Why were these changes made?
- (c) How was the population for the study selected?

Answer:

- (a) The **2003-04** Client Services Survey collected data from interviews with a total of 751 OEA clients from across Australia; 50 industry partners, 301 employers and a total of 400 employees.

The **2004-05** survey collected survey responses from 603 OEA clients from across Australia; 75 Industry Partners, 485 employers and 43 employees.

To better report on performance indicators and reflect current OEA initiatives, the 2004-05 survey was also different in some aspects to the survey used in 2003-04.

- (b) In mid-2004, a Federal Court decision¹ provided further clarification regarding the use of personal contact details for survey purposes.

In light of this decision, the Employment Advocate decided to include only employees who had had an AWA lodged, filed or approved in the 2004-05

¹ *Seven Network (Operations) Limited v Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance* [2004] FCA 637 (21 May 2004).

financial year and had contacted the OEA, and further, *had given prior and expressed consent for their personal details to be used for this survey and that these details could be disclosed to an external consultant.*

This group of employees was more likely to have used a range of OEA products and services, and was considered able to provide a more informed evaluation of their quality.

- (c) Current Industry Partners, and employers who had an AWA approved in 2004-05, were selected at random.

Employees were selected if they had had an AWA lodged, filed or approved in the 2004-05 financial year and on the basis of their contact with the OEA's 1300 service in early 2005. A condition of their selection for the survey was that they had consented to their personal details being used for the survey and that their details could be disclosed to an external consultant.

The Client Services Survey was reviewed and approved by the Statistical Clearing House of the ABS.