

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

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

Outcome 4

DEEWR Question No. EW669_10

Senator Cash asked on 21 October, DEEWR Hansard page 116 and 118.

Question

Why was Townsville-Thuringowa chosen as a Priority Employment Area instead of the Gold Coast? What were the reasons for choosing each Priority Employment Area?

Senator CASH—Can I get you to provide me with the figures—and you may need to take it on notice—of the actual number of people in the Townsville-Thuringowa area who are unemployed and the number of people in the Gold Coast labour force region who are unemployed.

Ms Paul—Perhaps what we might do is give you a picture for the broader range of the 70 variables, or a subset of them if they are aggregated, to give you a sense of what we were looking at—what we were seeing in terms of the rate of change in the negative direction for this area.

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Senator CASH—Can I also get the department to take on notice, due to time, to provide to the committee with the reasons in writing for the 20 priority employment areas they selected. I understand that may be a considerable amount of information, but it would be appreciated. Could I also get you to take on notice the reasons as to why Townsville-Thuringowa, with a low unemployment rate and a high employment rate, versus the Gold Coast, with a much higher unemployment rate, was designated a priority employment area.

Ms Paul—I think we have already taken that on notice.

Answer

In October 2009 (latest available data), there were 5800 people unemployed in the ABS Labour Force Region (LFR) of Northern-North West Queensland (the LFR within which the Priority Employment Area of Townsville-Thuringowa falls), while the population (age 15 and over) of the area stood at 194 700. At the same time, there were 16 900 people unemployed in the LFR of Gold Coast, while its population stood at 471 400.

Please also see the response to Question No. EW454_10.