

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

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

**Agency - Fair Work Ombudsman**

**DEEWR Question No. EW0605\_13**

**Senator Abetz asked on 17 October 2012 , Hansard page 31**

**Question**

**FWO - Reports of companies claiming to undertake work of FWO**

Senator ABETZ: I want to know that you are the real McCoy and not some phoney workplace ombudsman that is appearing before us. More seriously, can you give us a brief on that which you have warned businesses about—to watch out for phoney fair work ombudsmen. I understand there has been an issue in recent times where companies have been portraying themselves as undertaking the work of the Fair Work Ombudsman and have been charging for services. That clearly is a matter for concern. Having known you for a while, I was much assured, Mr Wilson, that it was not a phoney Fair Work Ombudsman appearing before us today! But, that aside, more seriously, how serious is it? How many reports have there been? Can you give us a general brief, please? Mr Wilson: Certainly. Hopefully I am the real McCoy! Senator Jacinta Collins: I can assure you of that, Senator Abetz. Mr Wilson: We do not have anyone at the table who has direct knowledge of that matter. However, what I can say is that there were, to my knowledge, a couple of reports about a particular website which looked very similar to ours in terms of the font, the colour, the styling and so on. I believe there also might have been some other issues which caused us to put that notification out. I will take the issue on notice and find more details.

**Answer**

*The Fair Work Ombudsman has provided the following response.*

In April 2012, FWO was alerted to a website ([www.fairworkonline.com.au](http://www.fairworkonline.com.au)) by a caller to the Fair Work Infoline who expressed concern about that site's similarity to the Fair Work Ombudsman's website, and the subsequent confusion this could cause.

FWO sought advice from the Australian Government Solicitor (AGS). Following receipt of the advice, FWO representatives contacted the business operating the website. Following this contact, agreement was reached for the business to implement a number of changes to their website to distinguish themselves from FWO.

FWO issued a media release on 19 June 2012 titled 'Beware of imitations' which advised readers that complaints had been received about companies looking like they are part of, or acting for, the FWO. The release also provided tips to assist people to determine whether they are dealing with FWO or not.

FWO is continuing to monitor the site.