

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

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

Outcome 4 – Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

DEEWR Question No. EW0668_13

Senator Abetz asked on 17 October 2012 , Hansard page 112

Question

Departmental discussions with Mr Riordan

Senator ABETZ: So did you talk to Mr Riordan at all prior to his appointment? Mr Kovacic: Not that I can recall at all. Senator ABETZ: Surely you must remember. Mr Kovacic: I will take it on notice. There may have been one conversation, but I am not sure. I will take it on notice. Senator ABETZ: You were aware that Mr Riordan had this \$1 million court case about his sitting fees on a superannuation board? Mr Kovacic: I was aware, in the lead-up to Mr Riordan's appointment, that there were legal proceedings afoot, whether the information was provided to the relevant person in the department or through media reports that there was a court case afoot. We were also ultimately aware that that matter was settled. Senator ABETZ: It is not a run-of-the-mill appointment, when you have got somebody with a \$1 million court case outstanding against him. That would be something that you would recall, I would suggest to you. But you are saying you cannot recall whether you spoke to him. Mr Kovacic: I may have had one conversation with Mr Riordan. I cannot recall whether that preceded his appointment or whether it occurred post his appointment. I have taken that on notice. If there were discussions, there would have been perhaps one or two, if that. Senator ABETZ: Ms Paul, I assume you did not have any discussions with Mr Riordan prior to his appointment. Ms Paul: No, I did not. We have now taken it on notice. I think we probably cannot go any further at this stage.

Answer

As the Chair of the panel convened to assess expressions of interest for appointment to Fair Work Australia, Mr Kovacic telephoned those selected by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations for possible nomination to advise them of that, and seek their confirmation that they would accept the appointment, should it be made. Mr Riordan was contacted as part of that process. Beyond that Mr Kovacic has no record or recall of any further conversations with Mr Riordan prior to his appointment.