**Question 1**

**Austrade employees with a disability**

**Written question from Senator Boyce**

**Senator Boyce asked:**

1. How many people with a disability were employed full-time and how many part-time? What classifications were these staff employed under?
2. What percentage of staff in the department had a disability at March 30, 2008 and March 30, 2009?
3. What programs does the Department have to encourage the employment of people with a disability?

**Answer**

1. Austrade employs five (5) persons with a disability. Of these, four (4) staff are full time and one (1) staff member is part time. Classifications for these staff are:
	* APS 5/Austrade Performance Level (APL) 2 – One (1) staff member
	* EL 1/APL 3 – Three (3) staff members
	* SES Band 2/APL 8 – One (1) staff member
2. The percentage of staff with a disability as at 30 March 2008 was 0.0019 per cent.

 The percentage of staff with a disability as at 30 March 2009 was 0.0095 per cent.

1. Austrade has in place Workplace Diversity Guidelines and a Disability Action Plan.

**Question 2**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

How many 2007/08 EMDG claims did Austrade receive by 1 December last year? How many of these were first-time applicants?

**Answer**

4,472 claims were received by 1 December 2008.

Of these 1,387 (31%) were first year applicants.

**Question 3**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

How many 2007/08 claims have been processed to date? Is this more or less than at the same time last year?

**Answer**

4,308 2007/08 grant year claims had been processed by the Balance Distribution Date of 16 June 2009.

At the same time in 2008, 4,146 claims for the 2006/07 grant year had been processed.

**Question 4**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

What percentage of 2007/08 claims will be processed before the end of June 2009? Is this more or less than last year?

**Answer**

96.3% of 2007/08 claims had been processed before the end of June 2009.

This compares to 97.6% of 2006/07 claims processed before end June 2008.

**Question 5**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

What percentage of first-time applications have been totally disallowed, ie: where the applicants have had their claims completely rejected with no grant payable?

**Answer**

15.3% of first time applicants (i.e. 212 in number) who claimed for the 2007/08 grant year have been totally disallowed.

**Question 6**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

Is this percentage higher or lower than that of first time 2006/07 EMDG claims? Can Austrade explain the difference?

**Answer**

The percentage of disallowed first time EMDG claims for the 2007/08 grant year was higher than that of first time EMDG claims for 2006/07, with the latter having 13% of claims totally disallowed (i.e. 179 of 1379).

Austrade has not undertaken the detailed analysis required to determine why the percentage of disallowed claims for first year applicants for the grant year 2007/08 was 2.3 percentage points greater than that for grant year 2006/07. This is a small variation.

**Question 7**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

What are the main reasons for the claims being rejected?

**Answer**

The three main reasons for the rejection of first time applicants for the 2007-08 grant year were:

* Failure of the applicant to meet criteria for eligibility
* Failure of the applicant’s product(s) to meet criteria for eligibility
* Failure of the applicant’s expenses to meet criteria for eligibility.

**Question 8**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

Is the percentage of first time claims that are “disallowed in full” higher than for second, third, fourth etc claims? If so, why?

**Answer**

Yes, the percentage of first time claims that are “disallowed in full” is higher than for second, third, fourth etc claims. This is because once the eligibility of the applicant, the applicant’s products and the applicant’s expenses have been established in the first application, applicants have a better understanding of their eligibility and what products and expenses are allowed under the scheme.

**Question 9**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

What follow up does Austrade undertake to assist applicants to become eligible in subsequent years?

**Answer**

Austrade holds EMDG coaching workshops regularly throughout the year as well as individual client consultations to assist clients understand the parameters of the EMDG scheme. Current and new applicants are referred to these forums. Austrade also provides extensive advice about client eligibility during the audit process and in written advices. Clients are encouraged to regularly contact Austrade to check their EMDG eligibility especially when their business undergoes change. All clients receive EMDG newsletters at least quarterly which detail changes in the scheme, key dates and events, as well as advice about scheme parameters and record keeping.

**Question 10**

**EMDG scheme**

**Written question from Senator Forshaw**

**Senator Forshaw asked:**

By what percentage has the average 2007/08 EMDG claim been increased or reduced? Is this higher or lower than usual? Can Austrade explain the difference?

**Answer**

For the 2007/08 grant year the average claim was $50,164 and the average grant approved and paid was $41,943, representing an adjustment factor of 14.5%.

For the 2006/07 grant year the average claim was $51,714, with the average grant paid being $35,584. This reduction represents an adjustment factor of 16.1% and also includes a reduction in grant value due to the payout factor of 24.4 cents in the dollar for grants valued above $70,000. For 2007/08 grants the second tranche payout factor was 100 cents in the dollar.

Given the variation between years, including the payout factor, Austrade has not done a detailed analysis of the small difference in adjustment factors and considers it would be very difficult to do so.

**Question 11**

**Assistance to business**

**Written question from Senator Bob Brown**

**Senator Bob Brown asked:**

1. Please detail which industries and companies are assisted through Austrade’s activities and how much of the budget is approximately spent on each?
2. Budget papers show that Austrade is planning to spend $14.9m over three years to facilitate export of clean energy technologies. Please provide the following details:
* Which types of clean energy technologies are being supported and how much funding is going to each?
* Which overseas markets are being actively pursued in this program?

**Answer**

1. Austrade provides information, advice and services to assist Australian business in taking advantage of trade opportunities and investment flows across all industry sectors. In 2008‑09, Austrade provided services to over 15,000 businesses broadly split across industry sectors with some 40% in services, 40% in manufacturing, 6% in the primary sector.

Additionally, 3,933 Australian businesses received Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) grants in 2007‑08 totalling $150.3 million. Service industries comprised 61% of recipients (mostly in tourism, education and culture and ICT) with the balance comprising manufacturing (36%) and primary (3%) sectors.

Austrade’s budget is primarily allocated on the basis of market development priorities and objectives rather than by industry sector.

1. The following clean technologies are included in Austrade’s $14.9 million Clean Energy Trade and Investment Strategy:
* Renewable energy including solar, wind, wave and tidal, geothermal and biofuels;
* Carbon, capture and storage;
* Carbon trading and carbon market services; and
* Other clean technologies and services including water, green buildings, environmental remediation, energy efficiency and waste management.

Austrade is not providing funding to technologies or to industry. The $14.9 million funding will be used to fund clean energy specialists in Austrade, activities that will help Australian companies access offshore markets and to help attract productive foreign investment into Australia.

Markets being actively pursued include Western Europe, North America, Japan, China, India, ASEAN, Latin America and the Middle East.