Subject: FW: Unpaid work draft fact sheets for comment [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Thursday, 31 October 2013 5:48 PM

Dear Judie

As you may recall, the Fair Work Ombudsman commissioned Professors Andrew Stewart and Rosemary Owens of the Adelaide Law School to report on the nature, prevalence and regulation of unpaid work experience, internships and trial periods in Australia.

Following receipt of the report *Experience or Exploitation: The Nature, Prevalence and Regulation of Unpaid Work Experience, Internships and Trial Periods in Australia,* we indicated our intention to consult with a broad range of groups and individuals from across the community, particularly the higher education sector, about our responses to the report’s findings and recommendations. I am writing to seek your comments about a suite of new resources we have developed to increase certainty about the types of lawful unpaid work arrangements that exist and the types of practices to avoid, and invite your involvement in our forthcoming higher education program.

**Our response to the report**

A key recommendation of the report was that we develop more detailed guidance on unpaid internships, including vocational placements. We believe vocational placements that satisfy the criteria provided in workplace legislation play an important role in a student’s development, and can provide a valuable introduction to a student’s chosen career path. We also recognise that there are some additional, albeit limited, instances where periods of unpaid work can be a practical method of evaluating someone’s skills or introducing them to a new career path.

We have prepared two draft fact sheets canvassing these issues; one providing an overview of vocational placements, and the other focusing on the use of unpaid trials, work experience and internships. We have also prepared four industry-specific fact sheets covering common practices in the hair and beauty, hospitality, professional services and print and broadcast industries.

**Your feedback**

As a representative of the higher education community, your input in these resources, particularly those addressing vocational placements, would be highly valued. I would greatly appreciate feedback that you have on whether the resources provide sufficient guidance for tertiary education institutions when making decisions about facilitating or entering into a vocational placement. You can provide this feedback to myself at Adam.Rodgers@fwo.gov.au, before close of business on Friday, 22
November 2013.

**Our higher education program**

As part of our focus on unpaid work and vocational placements, we are introducing a new higher education program, initially focused at the university sector. The program will include the provision of information and targeted resources, as well as industry seminars and webinars, and is scheduled to commence in late November 2013. The program will allow us to learn from your experiences in the practicalities of work integrated learning, and will offer participants the opportunity to have input into further resources developed for the sector and the broader community about the types of unpaid work that are and aren’t acceptable.

If you are interested in participating in the program, please contact me, nominating an appropriate contact person for us to liaise with.

If you would like to discuss any of the matters detailed above in the interim, please feel free to contact me on 03 9954 2640.

Many thanks in advance for your contribution to this important initiative.

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