

Updated &
cleared by CFO

Question on Notice

Time: 10.21am

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Lynette Wood, FAS CCD

Topic: Contract with Qantas for repatriation flights (costs)

Question: What was the process for contracting flights from India with Qantas [after receiving additional funding in the Budget]?

What is the passenger cost?

What is the average cost that Australians are charged broadly?

Answer:

- 1) A forward flight schedule is developed by Consular and Crisis Management Division (CCD) on a rolling basis, based on consideration of areas of highest demand.

Following approval by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Department contracts Qantas under a Deed of Standing Offer that was signed with Qantas on 13 October 2020. Details of contracts entered under this arrangement are published in AusTender (SON3734951 refers).

Each individual contract covers a group of flights, usually over a period of one month at a time.

- 2) The fare structure for facilitated government flights from India is as follows (based on current exchange rates):

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| a. Economy (Adult) | AUD \$1,500 |
| b. Premium Economy (Adult) | AUD \$3,251 |
| c. Business (Adult) | AUD \$6,069 |
- 3) Passengers are required to pay for their airfare to Australia and for quarantine on arrival. Passengers do not incur costs in relation to hotel isolation or testing prior to departure from India.

CONSULAR.

for clearance
please.

Question on Notice

Date: 3/6/2021

Time: 11:37

Who asked: Senator Kimberley Kitching, ALP, VIC

Witness: Lynette Wood, FAS CCD

Topic: Repatriation costs and contract arrangements with Qantas

Question: When the bubble in the hotel is happening, who is paying for the hotel rooms? Is that part of the agreement with Qantas?

Are you covering off Qantas' costs?

Is it possible to get a breakdown of those costs?

Answer: Costs associated with the pre-departure hotel bubble are covered under DFAT's contract with Qantas. The average total cost for three nights of accommodation, meals, and transport is \$167.30 per person.

✓

OK to read in

Question on Notice



Date: 3/6/2021

Time: 10:14am

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Lynette Wood, FAS CCD and Murali Venugopal, FAS Finance

Topic: Qantas/repatriation contracts

Question: When did you first consult with Qantas regarding resuming flights after 15 May? How much are they being paid? What is the value of the contract? I'd like some sense of quantum.

Answer:

DFAT consulted with Qantas on 6 May 2021 about resuming flights from 15 May.

DFAT has contracted Qantas to facilitate flights from Delhi for up to a maximum of \$652,000 (GST exclusive) per flight, plus other costs including pre-departure testing and hotel isolation. Final costs for each flight will depend on ticket receipts, freight revenue and other adjustments which will be reconciled following completion of each flight.

Question on Notice

Date: 3/6/2021

Time: 9:36am

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Lynette Wood, FAS CCD

Topic: Returning Australians from India

Question:

When did you give [the Foreign Minister] the plan for the three [upcoming] flights [from India]? How long did she have it for?

How many [flights from India] are you proposing for July?

Answer:

The department provided the plan including the three upcoming flights in June to the Minister initially on 11 May and then an update on 26 May, which was approved on 28 May.

Currently there are seven flights planned but not yet confirmed for July to Darwin – three of which are planned from India. We are working with other jurisdictions to seek agreement to additional flights from India in June and July.

The NT Government, based on its health advice, currently requires a spacing of nine days between flights arriving from India.

Question on Notice

Date: 3/6

Time: 9:30

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Gary Cowan, FAS, North and South Asia, DFAT

Topic: Current lockdown arrangements in India

Question:

Can you give me an update on the current lockdown arrangements in India? My understanding is that there's no current national lockdown but there are a series of localised lockdowns.

Answer:

There has been no nationally mandated lockdown in response to this latest wave in India. States and union territories are undertaking targeted lockdowns around COVID-19 hotspots.

As of 31 May 2021, the Times of India reported that the following states and union territories were in complete lockdown:

- Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Andhra Pradesh
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Assam
- Bihar
- Chhattisgarh
- Goa
- Gujarat
- Jharkhand
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Lakshadweep
- Manipur
- Meghalaya
- Mizoram
- Nagaland
- Odisha
- Puducherry
- Rajasthan
- Sikkim
- Tamil Nadu
- Telangana
- Tripura
- Uttarakhand
- West Bengal.

The following state and union territories were reported as being in partial lockdown:

- Chandigarh
- Delhi
- Haryana
- Himachal Pradesh
- Jammu and Kashmir
- Ladakh
- Madhya Pradesh
- Maharashtra
- Punjab
- Uttar Pradesh.

Question on Notice

Time: 11:59am

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Lynette Wood, FAS CCD

Topic: Bringing Australians home from India

Question: How many of the 70 people denied boarding in India are now back in Australia?

Did you contemplate, particularly for those who'd come from a long way away, at least finding short term accommodation in New Delhi?

Are you aware whether any of those who tested positive and remained in India have become unwell?

Answer:

Q1.

64 passengers (of the 70) or will have returned to Australia by 4 June 2021 on facilitated government flights (FCFs). Two passengers advised they no longer required a seat on a government facilitated flight, and four passengers have indicated they will seek to travel later.

Q2.

The Australian High Commission telephoned every passenger to discuss their individual circumstances and assist them with a solution. The majority of the passengers advised they would return to their home or the home of a family member for the 14-day isolation period. All passengers advised they did not require financial assistance. DFAT also sent an email to all passengers providing them with information about future travel.

Q3.

To the best of our knowledge, none of those who tested positive ahead of the 14 May flight became seriously unwell.

Question on Notice

Time: 11:50am

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Lynette Wood, FAS CCD

Topic: Repatriation flights from India

Question:

The flight [from India] arrived in Australia on 15 May. You signed the contract with Qantas for other flights by early May. How many [flights] did you sign for at that time? Up to eight or only three?

Were all the flights in May in one contract?

Did you split it up by destination?

Answer:

On 9 April 2021, DFAT and Qantas entered into one contract for 16 flights, including eight from India, between 2 and 30 May.

Following the pause on flights from India, DFAT entered into a revised contract with Qantas for 14 flights, including eight from India, between 3 May and 3 June.



Question on Notice

Date: 3/6

Time: 11:45

Who asked: Senator the Hon Penny Wong, ALP, SA

Witness: Senator the Hon Marise Payne and Lynette Wood, FAS CCD

Topic: Arrival of AusMAT medical officer in India and subcontracting of testing

Question: *When did [the AusMAT medical officer] arrive [in India]?*

When were you aware [that Neuberg Diagnostics were subcontracting the testing to CRL]?

Answer:

The AUSMAT public health expert arrived in New Delhi on Sunday 23 May 2021.

Qantas directly contracts testing providers for all pre-departure testing on facilitated commercial flights. We were advised of subcontracting arrangements between Neuberg Diagnostics and CRL on 14 May.