

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001448

OUTCOME: 0 - Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Travel Costs - Departmental

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Ludwig, Joe

Question:

1. Since Budget Estimates in June, 2014 is the Minister or their office or their delegate required to approve all departmental and agency international travel?
 - a) If so, under what policy?
 - b) Provide a copy of that policy.
 - c) When was this policy implemented?
 - d) List all occurrences of travel that this has occurred under.
 - e) Detail the process.
 - f) When is the Minister notified, when is approved provided?
2. Detail all travel (domestic and international) for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
3. Detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals). Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
 - a) What date was the minister or their office was notified of the travel?
 - b) What date did the minister or their office approve the travel?
4. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel?

Answer:

1. a-f) International travel proposals are processed and approved in accordance with the Whole of Australian Government official international travel policy issued by the Department of Finance.
2. See below table:

1 June – 30 September 2014	Domestic	International
Airfare costs	\$885	\$8,225
Airfare types	Economy	Business
Accommodation	\$672	\$3,677
Meals & other travel expenses	\$582	\$1,539
Total Costs`	\$2,139	\$13,441

3. See below table.

1 June – 30 September 2014	
Airfare costs	\$1,588,704
Airfare types	Business, Business Economy & Economy
Accommodation, meals & other travel expenses	\$1,033,769
Total Costs	\$2,622,473

N.B: Whilst taxi costs are a component of domestic travel expenditure, they have been excluded from the above figures as they cannot be reported separately from total departmental taxi costs due to limitations in our financial reporting system. In addition, the above figures include travel expenses by external committee members as these expenses cannot be separately reported.

Staff are required to travel extensively domestically to administer, monitor and regulate the many health and sport programs provided to the Australian public.

Travel is also related to the Department of Health's obligations under Commonwealth legislation and international frameworks and treaties. This includes the Department's therapeutic goods regulatory role to ensure therapeutics manufactured overseas meet Australia standards. The Department also participates in international meetings, including those of the World Health Organisation, Organisation for Economic co-operation and Development and Asia-Pacific Cooperation, to protect and promote Australia's health interests and to improve regional and global health outcomes

3 a) and b)

Where required, the Ministers' offices were notified in accordance with the process outlined in our response to question 1.

4. Planned travel (as pre-loaded into the Department's approval workflow system) for the period 1 October to 31 December 2014 is \$767,165. This figure will change over this period as bookings may be amended or cancelled before the travel date and other travellers will make new bookings.

Travel for the remainder of 2014 will be undertaken as required to support the Department's obligations under commonwealth legislation, international frameworks and treaties, and to attend meetings to support the Government's health and sport agenda.