

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Estimates Hearings February 2016**

**Communications Portfolio**

**Department of Communications and the Arts**

**Question No: 194(a)**

**Program 1.1**

**Hansard Ref: Written, 19/02/2016**

**Topic: Travel costs - department**

**Senator Ludwig, Joe asked:**

Since the change of Prime Minister on 14 September, 2015:

1. Is the minister or their office or their delegate required to approve all departmental and agency international travel?
2. If so, under what policy?
3. Provide a copy of that policy.
4. When was this policy implemented?
5. When is the minister notified, when is approval provided?
6. 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).
7. 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.
8. What date was the minister or their office notified of the travel?
9. What date did the minister or their office approve the travel?
10. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

**Answer:**

1. No, the Minister is not required to approve all departmental and agency international travel. The approval policy for international travel is listed in point 3.
2. N/A
3. All official international travel, must be approved by the Accountable Authority, except for:
  - a. Where the Accountable Authority, at her discretion, determines the Minister's approval should be sought.
  - b. Where the travel involves the negotiation of a treaty the travel will require the Ministers approval.

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- c. Where the travel proposes a significant delegation. A significant delegation is where more than five travellers across the portfolio are attending an event as a delegation. In this instance the entity leading the delegation is to seek approval for all portfolio travellers from the Minister.
4. The policy was implemented on 8 July 2015 as a result of the Department of Finance amending the whole-of-government *Official International Travel – Best Fare of the Day Policy*.
- 5.

<b>Travel</b>	<b>Date Minister notified</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Approval by</b>
Travel to Guam for the Festival of Pacific Arts	18 January 2016	27 January 2016	Minister

6. Departmental officers travel domestically for a variety of reasons. Travel records do not allow the Department to determine with accuracy which travel was to accompany the Minister. With regard to international travel, no departmental officers have accompanied the Minister on any overseas trip for the period 14 September 2015 to 31 January 2016.
7. For the period 1 September 2015 to 31 January 2016 the total expense for departmental officers was \$0.421m (GST excl) for domestic travel and \$0.289m (GST excl) for international travel.
- The Department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow individual components of travel to be identified. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.
8. N/A
9. N/A
10. The Department does not record travel related planning data in a way that would readily allow the identification of travel plans for the rest of this financial year. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.