

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**

**Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice**

**Additional Budget Estimates Hearings February 2017**

**Communications Portfolio**

**NBN Co Limited**

**Question No: 142**

**NBN Co Limited**

**Hansard Ref: Written, 10/03/2017**

**Topic: Failure to answer questions**

**Senator Bilyk, Catryna asked:**

In relation to NBN Co's previous failure to properly answer Questions on Notice about its expenditure of taxpayer funds (Questions on Notice numbers 130 and 132 asked in the 2016 Supplementary Budget Estimates refer), please advise why NBN Co is above the rules, and why NBN Co and its senior employees including Ziggy Switkowski are too busy to answer questions which are regularly answered at the very highest levels of Government including by the Prime Minister and His Excellency the Governor-General.

**Answer:**

nbn takes parliamentary processes very seriously and has dedicated significant resources in responding to more than 220 Questions on Notice in the last year alone.

In regard to QoN 130, the question related to functions or "official receptions" hosted by the nbn Chair. The response was that while the Chair does occasionally host a meal for the Board and executives preceding Board meetings, these would not be classified as official functions or receptions. They do not include floral arrangements or entertainment. nbn systems do not track the type of wine, if indeed there was any wine present. For nbn to try to ascertain these details would certainly be difficult or impossible.

To assist the committee in these circumstances, nbn's normal practice is to provide costs at the greatest level of reasonable detail. nbn has reviewed the response to this question and has undertaken the work to compile the costs associated with these dinners, which, for the period of October 2013 to end of February 2017 comes to \$34,486.68.

In regard to QoN 132, nbn sought to provide details of the governing policy authority, as set out in Remuneration Tribunal determinations, for the Chairman's travel and allowance entitlements. Responses were also provided for questions regarding staffing and access to Comcar services or other vehicles. In addition, available details concerning international travel and associated expenditure are provided in answer to QoN 184.