

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016**

**Outcome: Agency: ASQA**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000339**

Senator Ludwig, Joe provided in writing

***ASQA: Travel costs - department***

**Question**

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**

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has provided the following response:

1. The Minister is only required to approve international travel where the travelling officer is the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer. In all other instances, the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer approves all international travel for ASQA.
2. The Department of Finance guidelines for International Travel Entities.
3. URL at <http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/travel-and-related-services/faqs-international-travel-policy.html#q6>
4. Policy was implemented on 9 February 2015
5. The Minister is notified as soon as the requirement for International Travel by the Chief Commissioner is identified and approval sought as soon as practicable.
6. ASQA has not accompanied the minister on domestic or international travel for the period 14 September 2015 to 31 January 2016.

7. For the period 14 September 2015 to 31 January 2016 ASQA has undertaken two international trips as detailed below:
  - Peoples Republic of China (Beijing, Shanghai and Ningbo) to attend TVET Conference, meet with Chinese officials and commence the conduct of offshore compliance monitoring audits of Australian RTO's delivering offshore. The travel was for the period 22 October 2015 to 6 November 2015. ASQA was represented by three ASQA officers as listed below:
    - Dr Dianne Orr
      - International Airfares Total \$8140.94 AUD
      - Accommodation Total \$5487.93 AUD
      - Incidentals/Meals Total \$1601.69 AUD
    - Ms Janet Mulcahy
      - International Airfares Total \$6329.72 AUD
      - Accommodation Total \$4876.98 AUD
      - Incidentals/Meals Total \$1233.42 AUD
    - Mr Steven Morrissey
      - International Airfares Total \$6227.42 AUD
      - Accommodation Total \$4966.87 AUD
      - Incidentals/Meals Total \$1017.17 AUD
  - Ms Christine Chatburn – travelled to Taipei to meet with various Workforce Development staff on policy and quality assurance and speak at a conference about ASQA's approach on quality assurance and auditing for the period 15-21 November 2015. The cost of this trip is as follows:
    - International Airfares Total \$2,809.00 AUD
    - Accommodation Total N/A paid for by International Host TDA
    - Incidentals/Meals Total \$146.00 Lunches x 2 and Dinner x 1 provided for.
8. Not applicable because ASQA's Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer did not travel.
9. Not applicable because ASQA's Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer did not travel.
10. ASQA is planning to include a further round of audits in the Peoples Republic of China, Shanghai and its Special Administrative Region, Hong Kong, in the March-April 2016 timeframe. The purpose of the travel is to obtain information about the quality of off-shore training provision and to positively influence future compliance with the VET Quality Framework by Australian RTOs delivering off-shore and to better understand the issues and constraints facing providers and affecting quality training provision off-shore.