

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

#### Agency - Safe Work Australia

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000654

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

#### Question

##### SWA - Travel costs

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, 2, 3 and 4 The Australian Government's approval requirements for official international travel changed from 9 February 2015. Entities now follow approval requirements with their relevant Minister and include these in their Accountable Authority Instructions. Safe Work Australia's Accountable Authority Instructions state that for travel over \$20 000 and less than \$50 000 the travel must be approved by the relevant Cabinet Minister, and for travel of \$50 000 or more the relevant Cabinet Minister must consult with the Prime Minister in writing before approving the travel. Travel of \$20 000 or less must be approved by the appropriate Safe Work Australia delegate.
5. Where the Minister's approval is required, information is provided and approval is sought from the Minister prior to travel being booked.
6. Since 14 September 2015 there have been no instances of international or domestic travel for agency staff accompanying the Minister.
7. Total domestic travel for agency staff was \$101 485.33, broken down as follows:
  - Airfares \$57 376.34
  - Accommodation \$22 841.65

- Taxis \$11 819.95, and
- Meals and Incidentals \$9 447.39.

Safe Work Australia officers undertake domestic travel on official business to attend Safe Work Australia Members' meetings, Strategic Issues Group meetings and other official purposes as required.

Total international travel for agency staff was \$10 130.38, broken down as follows:

- Airfares \$7 197.78
- Accommodation \$2 424.08
- Taxis \$111.81, and
- Meals and Incidentals \$396.71.

These international travel costs relate to one trip by one agency staff member. The purpose of this travel was to attend the December meeting of the United Nations Subcommittee of Experts for the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals in Geneva, Switzerland as Australian Head of Delegation.

- 8 and 9. For the one international trip, the Minister was notified of the travel in November and approved the travel on 29 November 2015. All domestic travel was approved by Safe Work Australia delegates prior to the travel being undertaken.
10. For the rest of this calendar year, it is anticipated that agency staff will undertake official travel as required to attend meetings and other official purposes, including travel for one officer to the Northern Territory to undertake a six-week secondment as part of the 2016 Jawun Secondment Program.