

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Cross Portfolio

Department of Education Question No. ED0125_15

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Dept & all agencies: Travel costs - Department

A) Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, detail all travel 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). b) Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, 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. d) What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

Answer

Department

a) The department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided for this question.

b) For the period 1 March 2014 to 30 June 2014, the Department of Education¹, spent \$1,314,015.51 on travel expenses. The breakdown of expenses is \$660,847.13 for airfares, \$326,039.49 on accommodation and \$327,128.89 on other costs. To provide the requested level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

d) The department does not specifically budget or plan for individual travel. Travel is one cost of the department's business of policy and programme administration. Travel is undertaken for a range of purposes including to meet with providers of services or grant recipients for compliance or administration purposes and to consult on government policies and programmes.

¹ For the 2013-14 financial year, costs associated with Corporate and the State Office Network functions cannot be simply attributed to the individual departments. The value associated with these functions has been attributed to both departments.

Agency

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

- a) None, not applicable
- b) The authority does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided to these questions. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of resources. The following provides an overview of travel expenses incurred by ACARA for officer travel.
Staff Airfares (Domestic) \$153,505
Staff Airfares (International) \$10,231
Staff Accommodation \$46,657
Staff Meals and incidentals \$9,258
There were 296 domestic trips by 154 travellers and 5 international trips.
- c) ACARA does not plan travel or record this in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of agency resources.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

- a) Not Applicable
- b) Airfares - \$76,059.05 (inc GST)
Accommodation - \$7,547.95 (inc GST)
For AITSL to report all details requested would be an unnecessary diversion of resources.
- c) For AITSL to report all details requested would be an unnecessary diversion of resources. AITSL considers the necessity for such expenditure on a case-by-case basis. Travel is monitored for compliance with AITSL's Travel Policy as well as through regular reports from and discussion with the Travel Service Provider.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

- a) Nil
- b) Airfares: \$189,413 Travel allowances, accommodation and other costs: \$257,233. *Amounts include travel for non-AIATSIS staff such as Council and Committee members and stakeholder/community members who have been required to travel for AIATSIS business.
- c) Travel by AIATSIS staff over the rest of the calendar year is expected to include travel to: undertake research; meet with stakeholders including Indigenous communities; participate in conferences and events relating to research, publishing, collections and Indigenous affairs; and undertake necessary professional development.

Australian Research Council

- a) Nil
- b) The ARC does not keep information in the format required by this question and to provide the information requested would be an unreasonable diversion of agency resources. Total travel related expenditure for this period is \$152,920. The vast majority of travel expenditure by the ARC is for committee members (i.e. non-ARC officials).
- c) The ARC undertakes a range of operational travel over the course of the year and as such to identify future travel plans would be an unreasonable diversion of agency resources.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

- a) Nil response
- b) Details on all travel for agency officers for the period 1 March 2014 to 31 May 2014 is as follows:

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	41,850	8,648
Accommodation	9,159	3,467
Meals	1,837	377
Other travel expenses (such as incidentals)	13,736	790
Total Cost	66,582	13,282

Internal travel policy requires compliance with the WoAG travel arrangements and except the public officeholders, all other staff including SES officers travel economy class. Travel is undertaken based on business requirements such as attending meetings with stakeholders and site visits to Providers as part of regulatory processes.

- c) The budget for the rest of the rest of this calendar year (June-December 2014) is \$150,000. Travel is undertaken based on business requirements such as attending meetings with stakeholders and site visits.