

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015

#### Cross Portfolio

Department of Education Question No. ED0597\_15

Senator O'Neill asked on 22 October 2014 , Hansard page 9

#### Question

##### London business -Travel Guidelines

Senator O'NEILL: What I really want to ask is, in the last part did the department have any advice to the minister about the application of the guidelines in this particular situation in regards to overseas travel? Ms Paul: I do not know. I would have to take that on notice. I think that the guidelines are well known and I believe they were being adhered to. .... Ms Paul: I am confident that the entitlements that the minister were entitled to were shared. Senator O'NEILL: If you could provide the details of all of the discussions and agreements that were achieved at the meetings, or any of the engagements with regard to the minister's travel, that would be interesting. Ms Paul: Yes, sure. In particular, as I said in evidence to Senator Wright, the highlight of the trip in education terms was the striking of a whole new piece of architecture with the UK—the Australia-UK education agreement, or AUKED. It seems to be the way of these things that they become an acronym. But it was actually really important and very encouraging that we were able to strike an agreement in such a short space of time on significant higher education collaboration between the two countries. I have the agreement in front of me. It was agreed to towards the end of the trip after there had been iterations between the UK government, our people and DFAT et cetera. It allows for ongoing work between the two countries in the areas of international education, a range of higher education focuses and so on. It is quite an important thing. Australia has agreements with the UK in defence areas and so on, but has not had agreements in the more human services side. Senator O'NEILL: We would be interested to have that made available to us. Senator O'NEILL: If you could.

#### Answer

The processes for determining overseas travel is set out in the *Guidelines on Overseas Visits by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries*. The department did not provide any advice about the application of the guidelines in this particular situation.

During the visit to London in April 2014, Minister Pyne met with the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, then Secretary of State for Education and with the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, then Minister for Universities and Science. Minister Pyne also met with key higher education stakeholders at an education roundtable and delivered a speech at the Policy Exchange.

The key outcome of the visit was an agreement between Minister Willetts and Minister Pyne to establish an annual Australia - United Kingdom Education Dialogue (AUKED). Ministers agreed that the AUKED would cover recent developments in international education, higher education and research policies and identify areas for future collaboration.

Other key issues discussed included development of reciprocal student debt recovery arrangements, quality assurance in transnational education, and approaches to improving teacher quality.

The final shape of the bilateral agreement will be settled at the inaugural AUKED officials' meeting, which is scheduled for 2015 in the United Kingdom.