

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2014-15

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance

Outcome/Program: 3/3.1

Topic: Changes to Entitlements Handbooks (international travel)

Senator: Collins

Question reference number: F58

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 10 April 2015

Number of pages: 3

Question:

1. Can you provide details to changes to the Entitlements Handbook in the past 6 months?
2. Part Four of the Opposition Office holders Entitlements that deals with travel seem to have been updated recently.
 - a) Can you confirm that these guidelines have been updated recently?
 - b) Can you provide the date that the updated guidelines were approved and who approved the changes?
 - c) Can you outline the changes from the previous version?
 - d) Can you confirm when the Opposition were notified and by what means (e.g. correspondence etc), and on what date?

Answer:

1. In October 2014, the following changes were made to the *Opposition Office Holders' Entitlements Handbook*:

Section	Change
Throughout	Updates to references to legislation.
Throughout	Updates to sections of the handbook so that the handbook is consistent with other entitlements handbooks and removal of some information that duplicated information in the <i>Senators and Members' Entitlements</i> handbook or on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.
Accommodation and Office Facilities – Offices Outside Parliament House	Update to advise that the Special Minister of State has authorised the Presiding Officers to approve office information technology equipment and facilities necessary to operate the office.

Section	Change
Accommodation and Office Facilities – Office Equipment and Facilities	Update to advise who is responsible for approving equipment provided to the Leader of the Opposition during an election campaign.
Accommodation and Office Facilities – Office IT equipment and Facilities	Update to advise that the Special Minister of State has authorised the Presiding Officers to approve office information technology equipment and facilities necessary to operate the office and that the Department of Parliamentary Services is responsible for the administration of office IT. Removal of list of office IT equipment and facilities previously approved by the Special Minister of State.
Accommodation and Office Facilities – Additional Equipment and Facilities	Information added on additional home telephone services beyond those provided to a Senator or Member.
Accommodation and Office Facilities – Additional Postage Allowance	Information added on the administration of the additional postage entitlement.
Accommodation and Office Facilities – Mobile Telephones	Update to reflect the revised entitlement to mobile telephones from 1 July 2013, and to advise that the Department of Parliamentary Services is responsible for the administration of the mobile telephone entitlement.
Travel - Overseas Travel	Update to advise that official overseas travel by the Leader of the Opposition may be at a class no higher than business class. Added information on the entitlement to travel related insurance, as approved by the Special Minister of State. Clarification of the financial arrangements for overseas travel.
Travel: Overseas Study Travel	Removal of information in relation to overseas study travel.
Staff Matters – Recruitment	Update to advise that M&PS will meet the cost of online advertisements. However the cost of advertising in print media may now only be met under the printing and communications entitlement or by the opposition office holder personally. Remove entitlement to the use of private employment agencies to recruit employees. Remove guidelines for recruitment advertisements in print media.

2.

- a) Yes. Refer to the table above.
- b) 6 October 2014 by the Assistant Secretary, Entitlements Policy Branch, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS).

- c) From 24 July 2014, the official overseas travel entitlement of the Leader of the Opposition was limited to a class no higher than business class. Previously, there was no limit to class of travel, other than the extent of the entitlement budget.
- d) On 21 July 2014, the Special Minister of State wrote to the Leader of the Opposition advising of the Government's intention to limit the class of his official overseas travel entitlement to a class no higher than business class. In August 2014, the Department of Finance wrote to the Leader of the Opposition confirming that, with effect from 24 July 2014, the official overseas travel entitlement of the Leader of the Opposition is limited to a class no higher than business class.