

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2013

Communications Portfolio

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Question No: 135

Program No. ABC

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Travel costs

Senator Ludwig asked:

- a) For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental/agency 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.
- b) What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year from 7 September 2013? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- c) What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- d) What is the policy for business class airfare tickets?
- e) Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the total costs of the lounge memberships.
- f) When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of the support staff travel.
- g) Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer:

- a) The ABC spent a total of \$9.4 million on travel for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 November 2013. Domestic travel spend was \$6.7 million and international travel spend was \$2.7 million gross (including excess baggage).

The majority of domestic travel currently involves News (35%), Television (18%) and Radio (17%) and is primarily in relation to news gathering and program making.

The majority of international travel relates to News (47%), Television (17%) and ABC International staff (25%), in particular to cover news stories, production, Australia Network or AusAid funded activities.

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Details of expenditure are shown below.

Description	Period 5 YTD Actual 13/14
Airfares - Domestic	2,489,540
Allowances - Domestic	1,232,080
Accommodation - Domestic	1,504,625
Domestic taxis and pva	1,140,577
Travel Entitlements (9/B/4) under the Enterprise Agreement	69,211
Domestic Other (eg train fares and car Hire)	245,655
Total Domestic Travel Expenditure	6,681,689
Airfares - International	1,098,962
Allowances - International	1,197,814
International Other (eg train fares and car Hire)	369,087
Total International Travel Expenditure	2,665,862
Excess Baggage	36,825
Total Other	36,825
Total ABC Travel Expenditure	9,384,376

- b) The ABC's travel budget for the seven months to 30 June 2014 is \$9.7 million. Domestic travel for the seven months is budgeted at \$6.9 million and the budget for International travel is \$2.8 million.

The majority of the travel spend will be related to covering news stories, costs associated with program making, Australia Network and AusAid funded activities.

- c) The majority of travel spend for the calendar year will relate to covering news stories, costs associated with program making, Australian Network and AusAid activities.
- d) The ABC's Travel Policy is as follows:

“Domestic economy class travel is encouraged. Domestic business class travel is permitted subject to entitlement. All domestic business class travel requires Divisional Director approval prior to booking. Flights are monitored for policy compliance.”

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“Economy class is encouraged for all international travel. Where premium economy is available this is preferable to business class travel. International business class travel is permitted, subject to entitlement. By way of guidance, business class travel is permitted for overseas flights of more than 4 hours or where the employee is required to commence work within 11 hours (including stop overs) of arriving at their destination.”

e) Yes. 89 lounge memberships are provided.

Provision of lounge membership by the ABC is usually only for frequent travellers, and is at the discretion of each Divisional Director.

The renewal cost is \$300 per year. For new members there is a once-off \$180 joining fee.

f) It is not ABC policy for ABC executives to travel with administrative staff.

g) No.