

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings November 2013

Communications Portfolio

Department of Communications

Question No: 15

Program No. Corporate

Hansard Ref: In Writing

Topic: Provision of equipment – Minister’s Office

Senator Ludwig asked:

- a) For departments/agencies that provide mobile phones to Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries and/or their offices, what type of mobile phone is provided and the costs?
- b) For departments/agencies that provide electronic equipment to Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries and/or their offices, what are the ongoing costs from 7 September 2013 to date?
- c) Does the department/agency provide their Ministers and/or Parliamentary Secretaries and/or their offices with any electronic equipment? If yes, provide details of what is provided, the cost and to who it is provided.

Answer:

- a) The Minister and Parliamentary Secretary and their staff are provided a mobile phone. The cost for a mobile handset is \$900 - \$1100.
- b) Communication expenses reported from the Department’s financial management system includes expenses on items such as: portable devices, wireless cards, broadband, fax machines, land lines, mobile phones, etc. To attempt to provide disaggregated data would involve an unreasonable diversion of Departmental resources.

The Department’s financial expenses are recorded on accrual accounting basis, with these items reconciled at the end of every month. To provide expense data at any date other than month-end would risk misstatement of the Department’s position and require an unreasonable diversion of Departmental resources to rectify.

Communication expenses for the offices of the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary from 1 September 2013 to 31 October 2013 were \$6549.11 (GST excl).

- c) Yes. The Minister, Parliamentary Secretary and their staff are provided with electronic equipment to assist in carrying out their duties. The equipment provided includes items such as: a desktop computer, a mobile phone and a device for remote access to the Department’s network. In addition, the suites at Parliament House and the Electorate offices in Sydney, are set up with Wi-Fi, networked printers and video conferencing facilities.