

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing
26 February 2009

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Travel Expenditure

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 26 February 2009, E122)

QUESTION No.: AI-60

Senator ABETZ—How many of the CSIRO executive team are based outside of Canberra?

Mr Whelan—I will just do the maths on that, Senator.

Senator ABETZ—Take it on notice; I do not need a specific answer now. What support by way of airfares, accommodation and living away from home allowance does CSIRO provide to these senior executives?

Mr Whelan—Senator, as a general rule CSIRO does not provide any allowances to officers when they are travelling overnight. We cover actual expenses, but I am happy to look at the costs associated with that travel.

Senator ABETZ—Let us say if I am home based in Hobart and I travel to Canberra for work during the week, am I paid a living away from home allowance or not?

Mr Whelan—As a general rule, no, Senator.

Senator ABETZ—If I stay in a hotel, my hotel bill is then reimbursed?

Mr Whelan—That is correct, Senator.

Senator ABETZ—All right, so instead of using the term living away from home allowance, what term should I be using?

Mr Whelan—Expenses, Senator.

Senator ABETZ—Expenses, if you can provide that to me on notice.

Mr Whelan—I will do that.

Senator ABETZ—Thank you for clarifying that for me.

ANSWER

There are four Executive Team members based in Canberra and seven Executive Team members based outside of Canberra.

The CSIRO policy on travel applies to all CSIRO staff including Executive Team members. Except where noted below Executive Team members receive the same benefits as all other CSIRO staff.

The CSIRO policy on travel states the following:

1. Official travel should be at no personal expense or monetary gain to staff, and should apply equitably and consistently throughout CSIRO.
2. Travel arrangements should be the most economical to CSIRO given the nature and purpose of the trip.

3. Business Unit Managers and Officers-in-Charge are responsible for the effective management of travel within their units and are required to maximise efficiencies consistent with good risk management strategies.
4. All reasonable expenses incurred in undertaking official travel will be reimbursed by CSIRO.
5. Where economic and practical, audio or video conferencing facilities and other means of communication should be used.
6. All air travel which is paid for by CSIRO must be arranged and booked through CSIRO contracted travel agent(s). Hotel reservations, rental car bookings and other bookings may also be made through the appropriate travel agency.

Wherever possible staff travel on the lowest logical fare and take advantage of any discounted or promotional fares and packages

The normal class for domestic air travel is Economy Class unless otherwise specified in an employment contract or unless a manager considers another class is reasonable in the circumstances and this is approved prior to travel.

While Executive Team members are entitled to Business Class domestic travel the majority of Executive Team domestic travel is at economy class.

The normal class for international air travel is a standard up to Business Class unless otherwise specified in an employment contract.

CSIRO Credit Cards are the normal means of incurring travel costs such as meals, ground transport and accommodation. In normal circumstances, accommodation is not higher than a four star hotel offering government or CSIRO discount rates.

In order to eliminate costs and inconvenience involved in processing minor "out-of-pocket" expenses, a fixed payment of \$15 for each 24 hour period or part thereof, commencing from the time of departure, can be paid for domestic travel. The rate for international travel is \$30 for each 24 hour period or part thereof.