

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2007-08
28 May 2007

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND RESOURCES

TOPIC: Tourism Australia marketing

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard 28/5/07, page E72)

QUESTION No. B1-124

Senator O'BRIEN—What about the global programs including activities with National Geographic and Discovery Channel such as the Great Australian Outback Cattle Drive and similar activities? Were any of those activities performed in 2006-07?

Mr Buckley—Yes, but they are ongoing.

Senator O'BRIEN—How much has been expended to date in 2006-07?

Mr Buckley—I have not got that with me at this point.

Senator O'BRIEN—How long will it take to get that information?

Mr Buckley—Do you want the year-to-date spend on those activities?

Senator O'BRIEN—Yes.

Mr Buckley—I think that it would take a couple of weeks to check it through.

Mr Noonan—In the answer I referred to earlier, AI-46, to Senator Stephens's questions last time, the answer provided by Tourism Australia drew attention to the fact that a lot of the resources for these programs—perhaps not all but a lot of them—are split across projects, teams and indeed across regions, so it was very difficult to provide a breakdown of expenditure of budget across every program. Mr Buckley also referred to the commercial sensitivity of some aspects of it, particularly where we are competing with other national tourism organisations' marketing activities.

Senator O'BRIEN—This is about expenditure of public money. There is nothing in the estimates process that allows for the refusal to answer questions without a very clear statement about it failing the public interest test. I hear nothing in your comments that indicates it is the subject of public interest immunity.

Mr Noonan—I was not suggesting that. I was just referring to an answer to what seems to be a similar question to the one that you are now asking. There was a breakdown of expenditure given in that answer. It was under the output structure rather than by reference to particular programs, presumably for the reasons that the answer advanced.

Senator O'BRIEN—It may be that there is an endeavour not to answer the question directly, but I do not think that is acceptable. That is why I am raising this issue now.

The answer to question 3079 does not answer the question in either of its parts. As I have indicated, part one was about activities in 2006-07 arising from the portfolio budget statement of 2006-07, and the answer contained a range of events recited for 2005-06.

Mr Noonan—I cannot comment on answer 3079, but it looks as if all we could do would be to take on notice the question that you now raise and do what we can to answer it.

Senator O'BRIEN—It is taking on notice a question on notice that has already not been answered. What assurance can we have that we are going to get an answer? I am hearing about another question that has been sitting in the minister's office since March.

ANSWER

In 2006/07 the budget for Global Programs was \$7.2 million.