

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Senate Estimates

1 June 2010

Question: BR13
Topic: Program Support - Tourism Consumer Protection
Proof Hansard Page: E45

Senator Bushby asked:

Senator BUSHBY-What about program support funding for improved access by overseas visitors to Australian consumer protection?

Ms Madden-Sorry, could you elaborate?

Senator BUSHBY-Improved access by overseas visitors to Australian consumer protection is something I understand the government has undertaken to deliver.

Ms Madden-The tourism consumer protection fund is administered by the Australian government but the Treasury is actually doing a review of that at this point in time. We are involved with that. We do not have any new budget allocation. It is met through departmental running costs. I can include it in what in-kind support we have in the supplementary material we will provide to you on notice.

Answer:

The Department does not allocate internally in a formal budgetary manner how much time is done in kind by its officers for each of the various activities it undertakes. Consistent with broader Australian Public Service practice, the Tourism Division's operating budget is applied flexibly to meet ongoing and emerging priorities, although some activities also have separate program funding.

The Tourism Quality and Innovation Section within the Tourism Division is responsible for tourism quality and assurance issues, including matters relating to tourist consumer protection. This section responds to correspondence on consumer issues and manages the online tourism complaints facility, which enables tourists who believe they have been treated unfairly by a business in Australia to lodge a complaint online. Online complaint forms are provided in English, Chinese and Korean languages, and complaints submitted online are referred to the relevant state and territory fair trading agency for response. General information on consumer protection is also provided on the Departments' website.

As at 1 July 2010, annual Tourism Division staff costs (including overheads) for activities focussed in this area are approximately \$100,000.