

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
 Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
 17 October 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Travel Costs

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Bushby

QUESTION No.: SI-166

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
2. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental 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).
3. Are the Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11) guidelines being followed? How is the department/agency following the advice? How is this monitored? If the guidelines are not being followed, please explain why.
4. 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.
5. 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.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION (DIISRTE)

1. Details on Departmental officers who accompanied the Minister on official overseas travel for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows.

Minister Evans – Indonesia, 4-5 July 2012

Departmental Officer	Travel (airfares including type)	Accommodation	Travel expenses (such as incidentals)	Cost (GST exclusive)
Robert Griew	Not applicable – VIP Jet	Provided by Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture	\$25	\$257

Minister O'Connor – Russia, Finland and Germany, 1-10 August 2012

Departmental Officer	Travel (airfares including type)	Accommodation	Travel expenses (such as incidentals)	Cost (GST exclusive)
Michael Schwager (Russia only)	\$10,511 business class	\$2,097	\$704	\$13,313

2. Details on all travel for departmental officers for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows.

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	1,564,965	797,230
Accommodation	863,869	183,800
Meals	230,858	166,142
Travel Expenses (such as incidentals)	940,747	54,416

3. Employees of the Department and portfolio Agencies are required to take the lowest practical fare when travelling in line with principles set out in Finance Circulars 2012/04 and 2015/05. The Department receives regular reports from the travel service provider which are monitored for compliance.
4. Lounge membership is provided annually to frequent travellers on the basis that it provides effective and efficient use of the traveller's time and is not based on classification level. For the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012, the Department provided 510 Qantas and 43 Virgin Australian memberships at a cost ranging from \$249 to \$900 depending on the length of the membership.
5. No.

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES (AIATSIS)

AIATSIS does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided to these questions, without an unreasonable diversion of agency resources.

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE (AIMS)

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
2. Details on all travel for agency officers for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows.

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	180,519	13,657
Accommodation	100,146	6,980
Meals	36,936	2,982
Travel Expenses (such as incidentals)	40,767	5,133

3. AIMS is not an FMA agency and is not subject to the policy outlined in the Finance Circulars, however, its travel guidelines are based on lowest practical fare.
4. AIMS provides lounge memberships to its employees on the basis that it provides effective and efficient use of the traveller's time. For the financial year to 31 October 2012, four Qantas memberships have been purchased at a cost ranging from \$627 to \$645 depending on the length of the membership.
5. No.

AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION (ANSTO)

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
2. Details on all travel for agency officers for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows.

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	207,531	739,616
Accommodation	31,428	112,201
Meals (included in Accommodation)	n/a	n/a
Travel Expenses (such as incidentals)	16,250	58,012

3. ANSTO is not an FMA agency and is not subject to the policy outlined in the Finance Circulars, however where possible employees are required to take the lowest practical fare of the day.
4. ANSTO provides lounge memberships to its employees on the basis that it provides effective and efficient use of the traveller's time. For the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012, 32 Qantas memberships have been renewed at a cost of \$290 each under a discounted corporate scheme for the 12 month period.
5. No.

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL (ARC)

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
2. ARC officers undertook a total of 85 trips for financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 at a cost of \$71,131. The ARC does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided to the question, without an unreasonable diversion of Agency resources.
3. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
4. ARC provides lounge memberships to its employees on the basis that it provides effective and efficient use of the traveller's time. For the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012, one Qantas membership has been purchased at a cost \$777.
5. No.

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY (ASQA)

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
2. Details on all travel for ASQA officers for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows:

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	202,911	0
Accommodation	109,270	0
Meals	16,725	0
Travel Expenses (such as incidentals)	74,421	0

3. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
4. As per the ASQA Travel Policy to qualify for an airline lounge memberships it must be anticipated that the staff member will be required to undertake eight or more business trips in a 12 month period and have approval from their delegate. For the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012, six Qantas memberships have been purchased at a cost ranging from \$290 to \$510 depending on the length of the membership.
5. No.

COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CSIRO)

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.

2. CSIRO's total cost of domestic and international travel for the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is \$13,201,504. This includes fares and similar transport costs such as taxis and rental cars, and travel expenses such as accommodation and meals. The effective management of travel is the responsibility of each unit within the organisation and as such the detailed data is not readily available. The organisation can obtain the information at this level of detail however it would involve an unreasonable diversion of the organisation's resources
3. Where possible employees of the department and Portfolio agencies are required to take the lowest practical fare when travelling in line with the Finance Circulars 2009-10 and 2009-11 principles.

The Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11) guidelines have been incorporated in CSIRO's Travel Procedures. The effective management of compliance with the Travel Procedures is the responsibility of each business unit within the Organisation. The central travel area also receives and monitors reports from the Service provider detailing usage and compliance. Some CSIRO travellers undertake travel for and on behalf of external parties. In such cases, those parties may arrange and subsidise the travel outside of the requirements of the Finance Circulars.

4. Airline lounge memberships are available to all CSIRO employees under the travel policy. CSIRO may pay for lounge membership for eligible travellers on official CSIRO business travel, at the managers' discretion. To be eligible for lounge membership, travellers must make more than eight flights per year. Lounge membership is not restricted by classification level. For the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 there has been 185 Qantas and three Virgin Australia memberships purchased at a cost range from \$290 to \$900 depending on the length of the membership. The total cost of lounge memberships for the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is \$95,167.
5. Administrative staff such as Executive Assistants and Personal Assistants do not travel with CSIRO Executives unless there is a business case requirement to do so.

IP AUSTRALIA

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
2. Details on all travel for agency officers for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows.

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	125,645	195,869
Accommodation	47,783	101,608
Meals	17,083	Included in Accommodation
Travel Expenses (such as incidentals)	6,057	Included in accommodation

3. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.

4. IP Australia provides lounge memberships to its employees on the basis that it provides effective and efficient use of the traveller's time. For the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 there have been five Qantas and no Virgin Australia memberships purchased at a cost range from \$475 to \$695 depending on the length of the membership.
5. No.

TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY AND STANDARDS AGENCY (TEQSA)

1. Please refer to the response provided by DIISRTE.
2. Details on all travel for agency officers for the 2012-13 financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 is as follows.

	Domestic Cost \$ (GST exclusive)	Overseas Cost \$ (GST exclusive)
Airfares	62,382	7,105
Accommodation	13,864	1,639
Meals	2,272	108
Travel Expenses (such as incidentals)	17,952	0

3. TEQSA's travel policy requires staff to take the lowest practical fare when travelling. This is monitored through the monthly acquittal of the travel invoice.
4. TEQSA's provides lounge memberships to its employees on the basis that it provides effective and efficient use of the traveller's time. For the financial year to date as at 31 October 2012 there have been eight Qantas and no Virgin Australia memberships purchased at a cost of \$354 per one year membership.
5. No.