



Australian Government

Department of Defence
Strategy Group

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14 May 2004

Ms Saxon Patience
Acting Secretary
Senate Legislation Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade
S1-57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Patience,

Saxon

I write to correct two typographical errors in the response to written question 38 (W38) part c) and to provide information from the Chief of Air Force arising from the Senate Legislation Committee additional estimates hearing of 18 February 2004.

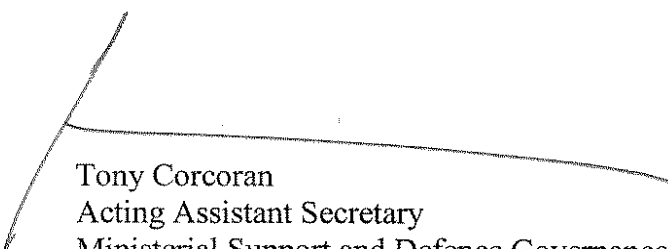
The correct figures for 2001-02 and 2002-03 overseas travel should be \$36,224,528 and \$39,722,657 respectively, which match the amounts shown in question W27 (at Tab A). An amended electronic response to W38 has been provided to the Secretariat.

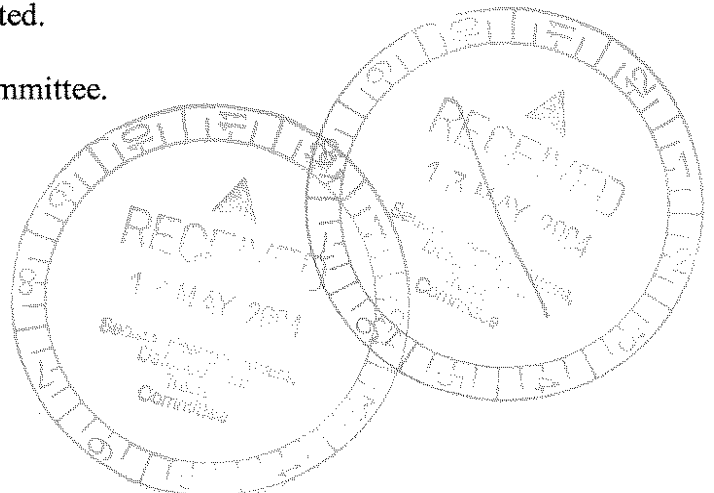
In addition, on page 87 of the Official Committee Hansard (at Tab B), when responding to Senator Evans regarding alleged drug use in the Air Force, Air Marshal Houston stated that at RAAF Amberley "there was also a need to investigate a further 25 [members] for alleged use of drugs. I do not have the precise figures for the outcome of the 25 who were investigated. I will get that for you".

The Chief of Air Force advises that there was insufficient evidence to support the allegations against any of the additional 25 members investigated.

I apologise for any inconvenience caused to the committee.

Yours sincerely


Tony Corcoran
Acting Assistant Secretary
Ministerial Support and Defence Governance



Overseas Travel**QUESTION W38**

Senator Evans

- a) How many overseas trips were taken by employees (civilian and military) in Defence in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 to date?
- b) What were the destinations of each of these overseas trips?
- c) What was the total cost of overseas trips of staff for by Defence in 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, and 2003-04 to date? Please provide a breakdown of the cost of accommodation allowances, food allowances and airflights.

RESPONSE

- a) Data concerning overseas trips by Defence members are only available on a calendar year basis and are based on the number of tickets issued. The following table represents the number of overseas trips taken by Defence employees, both civilian and military on commercial aircraft.

Year	Number of Tickets
2000	12,708
2001	14,430
2002	17,208
2003	18,122
2004 – January only	1,329

- b) This information is not readily available and Defence is not able to devote the considerable time and resources to manually collate the information requested.
- c) The cost of all overseas air travel undertaken by Defence officials, military and civilian, is shown in the table below. Defence is not prepared to devote the considerable time and resources required to provide information prior to 2000-01, when the current contract with Qantas commenced. In addition, the requested breakdown of expenses is not readily available and Defence is not prepared to devote the considerable time and resources required to provide information.

Period	Cost \$
2000-01	25,887,311
2001-02	36,224,528
2002-03	39,722,657
2003-04 as at 31 January 2004	24,957,203

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Period	Cost \$
2000-01	25,887,311
2001-02	36,225,528
2002-03	39,723,656
2003-04 as at 31 January 2004	24,957,203

Overseas Travel by Defence Officials

QUESTION W27

Senator Evans

Please provide a table outlining all overseas travel undertaken by all Defence officials (military and civilian) during 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 (to date). Please indicate the purpose of each trip, costs, who accompanied them and whom they had official meetings with.

RESPONSE

Overseas commercial air travel costs undertaken by Defence officials (military and civilian) are as follows:

Period	Cost \$
2001-02	36,224,528
2002-03	39,722,657
2003-04 as at 31 January 2004	24,957,203

The details of each trip are not readily available and Defence is not able to devote the considerable time and resources required to manually collate this information.

the soldier concerned has been charged for failing to secure his weapon. As to the others, we are working with our investigators and civil investigators but we do not seem to be able to find them.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—What strikes me about that is that they all happened within a fairly short period of time.

Lt Gen. Leahy—It was from January to July in two very widely separated areas. It is disappointing; it should not have happened but I would not have said that it happened in a very short space of time. I would find it very difficult to draw conclusions from this that it is any organised activity.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—Okay. Air Marshal Houston, I will start with the Amberley situation. Is there any update on processes involving the airfield defence guards issues? Can you give us a briefing on where that has got to?

Air Marshal Houston—Where would you like me to start, Senator?

Senator CHRIS EVANS—I want to come back to you to talk about the two airmen and AC Moore in relation to those issues, but what has been your broad response to those found involved in taking drugs? How is that progressing and what action have you taken?

Air Marshal Houston—I spoke last time about what happened back in September 2002—that was 18 months ago. As you will recall, we had three young members come forward and inform the commanders that there was some substance abuse within the wing. Subsequently the whole outfit was recalled from exercise and they were all brought together in one location. The commander briefed them and told them that we would not tolerate the use of drugs. There was then a process of each individual being interviewed by his commander and the squadron warrant officer. Out of that we had 22 self-referrals. There was also a need to investigate another 25 for alleged use of drugs. I do not have the precise figures for the outcome of the 25 who were investigated. I will get that for you. Out of the self-referrals there were five positive drug tests because a self-referral involved a process of drug testing.

Since then we have embarked on a very extensive program of education and monitoring, and to my knowledge we have had only one case of a positive drug test. That is after all this happened. Of course, after that September we commenced a full investigation into the extent of the substance abuse in the wing. The finding from that was that there was some substance abuse but it was not widespread and that all the cases that had been identified were being properly dealt with. Since then we have not had any major issues.

The command team up there at the moment is doing a great job. I have spoken with them several times about my requirements to make sure we maintain our policies with regard to the nonmedical use of drugs. They are doing a good job. We kicked off our drug testing program with a trial where we tested the senior leadership team—the 31 senior officers in the Air Force. That gave the senior leaders some idea of what was involved.

Senator CHRIS EVANS—You are not going to reveal the test results?

Air Marshal Houston—The tests were all negative. We commenced the random drug testing and alcohol testing last week at Amberley. We tested 11 individuals for drugs and another 11 for alcohol in one of the units at Amberley—it was not the airfield defence wing—