

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 9 FEBRUARY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Community Cabinet

Question reference number: HS55

Senator: BARNETT

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of pages: 3

Question:

- a) What was the cost of Ministers travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held since Budget Estimates?
- b) How many Ministerial Staff and Departmental officers travelled with the Minister for the Cabinet meeting?
- c) What was the total cost of this travel?
- d) What was the total cost to the Department and the Ministers office?

Answer:

- a) There have been nine Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates. Minister Bowen attended seven meetings and the cost of travel and expenses was \$10,529, noting the caveat below*

* The cost of airfares and travelling allowance (including Motor Vehicle Allowance) for ministers and their staff falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD). DoFD provided these costs and advise that they do not include travel by taxis (due to difficulties determining exact destinations from information provided by Cabcharge) or travel on Special Purpose Aircraft, which is administered by Department of Defence. COMCAR costs which are administered by the Department of Human Services have been included. DoFD also notes that these costs rely on an assumption that all travel to and from each location was for the purpose of attending Community Cabinet meetings.

- b) The number of staff travelling with the Minister for Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates is as follows:

Meeting	Number of Ministerial staff	Number of Departmental staff
Beenleigh	1	3
Elizabeth	1	2
Port Macquarie	1	2
Geraldton	1	3
Hobart	0	3
Bathurst	1	3
Townsville	2	3
Adelaide	0	3
Ballarat	1	3

- c) The total cost of travel and expenses for Ministerial and Departmental staff attending Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates, noting the caveats below, was \$44,139.

Meeting	Ministerial staff Travel costs*	Departmental staff Travel costs**
Beenleigh	\$1,303	\$4,743
Elizabeth	\$1,273	\$2,942
Port Macquarie	\$734	\$1,268
Geraldton	\$1489	\$7,562
Hobart	Nil	\$4,709
Bathurst	Nil	\$1,146
Townsville	\$2,503	\$5,136
Adelaide	Nil	\$5,907
Ballarat	\$480	\$2,944
TOTAL	\$7,782	\$36,357

* As noted in part a) of this answer, the cost of travel for ministerial staff falls within the portfolio responsibilities of DoFD. DoFD provided these costs and advise that they do not include travel by taxis (due to difficulties determining exact destinations from information provided by Cabcharge) or travel on Special Purpose Aircraft, which is administered by Department of Defence. DoFD also

notes that these costs rely on an assumption that all travel to and from each location was for the purpose of attending Community Cabinet meetings.

**** Departmental staff undertake site visits and other business meetings in the area when travelling to Community Cabinet meetings.**

- d) There have been nine Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates and the total cost for the Human Services portfolio was \$40,322 (excluding salaries). As noted in parts a) and c), airfare and travelling allowance costs incurred by ministers and their staff to attend Community Cabinet meetings falls within the portfolio responsibilities of DoFD. Details of these costs are outlined in a) and c) above.