

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional Estimates 8-11 February 2010

Question: PM40

Topic: Copenhagen - Cost and FOI request

Type of Question: Hansard, F&PA 8 February 2010 pp92-94

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

Number of pages: 3

Senator FERGUSON-Madam Chair, I only want to ask a couple of questions just to make it quite clear, in response to some of the answers, that with the freedom of information request that was complied with and reported on 9 January no costs associated with PM&C have been included in that freedom of information request. In other words, all of the costs are on top of the amount that has been described in the freedom of information request.

[...]

Senator FERGUSON-Are you saying that at no stage have you responded giving any information on the costs of PM&C to anybody else even including the freedom of information request, which is some \$1 and a half million? So what you are saying is that your costs are on top of any published amount that has been put in the paper.

[...]

Senator Ludwig-Thank you, Chair. As I indicated earlier, you are claiming that there is an FOI request. This department, as I hear the evidence, say that they have not received any. Why would you ask PM&C? It would seem appropriate for you to ask the Department of Climate Change. Secondly, in relation to the question about other costs, of course the department of finance can deal with issues in relation to MoPS Act employees and provide those costings. Yes, Senator, as you will find in opposition, you do have to go to relevant committees to ask relevant questions of the various departments because that is where the information resides. They are best placed to provide the level of detail that you

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require. You can certainly, as other senators ask questions, put them on notice. I indicated earlier that I would take the earlier part of your question on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Climate Change (Climate Change) received a Freedom of Information request dated 7 December 2009 from Nine Network Australia, seeking access to documents outlining the anticipated total itemised cost of Australia's Federal Government delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The FOI decision provided a document containing information about total anticipated costs as at 7 December 2009, which included some of the anticipated costs for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (the Department). Some of the Department's costs were included within global costs, though not yet attributed to individual departments. The Department also provided Climate Change with information about the costs of air fares for staff of the Department, but was not able to provide all anticipated costs, as some had not yet then been identified or attributed within global costs.

The costs of official overseas travel by Ministers, Parliamentary Secretary, accompanying spouses (where relevant) and accompanying staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* are paid by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance). Finance has advised that expenditure for this overseas visit has not been reconciled. Dates, destination, the purpose and costs of all official overseas travel are tabled in the Parliament every six months in a report titled *Parliamentarians' Travel paid by the Department of Finance and Deregulation*. These reports are also published on the Finance web site.

As at 3 March 2010 the Department has incurred the following costs for the three officers who accompanied the Prime Minister to Copenhagen:

Airfares \$25,820.29

Accommodation \$19,682.53

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Meals \$903.40

Transport \$161.26

Miscellaneous \$1,069.43.