

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 13-16 Feb 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.4 Support Services for Government Operations

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 102

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 March 2012

Number of pages: 4

Question:

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately,) undertaken by your portfolio Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type? i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
2. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for any Minister and Parliamentary staff that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff.
3. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff.
4. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each department and agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type? i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
5. Are employees taking the most direct route when travelling? If not, please explain why.
6. 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 cost per employee.

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7. When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as their 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:

1. Costs of official travel by ministers and parliamentary secretaries are met by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance). Detailed information regarding parliamentary entitlements expenditure, including overseas and domestic travel by ministers and parliamentary secretaries is tabled in the Parliament every six months and published on the Finance website. The report also includes car transport costs for ministers and parliamentary secretaries met by their home departments.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet:

- did not incur any security costs for travel by the Prime Minister or other portfolio ministers;
 - incurred costs of \$12,781.83 (GST exclusive) for entertainment for official functions hosted by the Prime Minister from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012 (See PM88 for details); and
 - incurred costs of \$3,161 (GST exclusive) for gifts presented by the Prime Minister during her official overseas visits from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012.
2. Costs associated with travel by ministerial staff accompanying ministers and parliamentary secretaries are administered by Finance. Overseas travel costs are included at an aggregate level by Senator or Member in the report referred to in question 1. Domestic travel costs for Members of Parliament (Staff) (MOP(S)) Act employees, including staff accompanying ministers and parliamentary secretaries on domestic travel, is included at an aggregate level in the MOP(S) Act Annual Report which is tabled in the Parliament and published on the Finance website.
3. The department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow extraction of information on cases where departmental staff accompanied portfolio ministers on official travel within Australia. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

The international travel costs of departmental officers accompanying the Prime Minister and other portfolio ministers are as per Attachment A.

4. The department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow an answer to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

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For the period 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012, total travel and accommodation costs for the department from departmental funds were \$2,609,276 (GST exclusive) for travel and \$2,771,819 (GST exclusive) for accommodation. These costs include travel and accommodation expenses associated with management of the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

5. Employees take the most direct route when travelling.
6. The department does not record lounge membership data in a way that would readily allow an answer to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

Lounge memberships for Qantas Club, Virgin Lounge and Regional Express are available to eligible employees. Memberships are only granted to employees who need access for work purposes.

7. When SES employees travel, generally no support or administrative staff travel with them.

Attachment A

The travel costs of departmental officers accompanying the Prime Minister and other portfolio ministers are as follows:

Purpose of Trip	Advance, coordinate & accompany the Prime Minister's visit New Zealand 6-8 September 11	Advance, coordinate & accompany the Prime Minister's visit France & Afghanistan 1-8 November 11	Advance, coordinate & accompany the Prime Minister's visit United States of America 11-15 November 11	Advance, coordinate & accompany the Prime Minister's visit Indonesia 18-20 November 11
Minister accompanied	Prime Minister	Prime Minister	Prime Minister	Prime Minister
Travel	\$1,687	\$24,331	\$11,561	\$5,727
Accommodation/ food/beverages	\$7,031	\$12,471	\$5,739	\$11,342
Security/gifts/ entertainment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other expenses	\$1,376	\$3,281	\$2,119	\$1,914
Staffing	\$4,438	\$17,944	\$14,064	\$9,010
Total	\$14,532	\$58,027	\$33,483	\$27,993