

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman
Outcome/Program: 1
Topic: Travel costs

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: 69

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 April 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- (1) For the financial year to date, please detail 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 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). Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- (3) What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- (4) 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?
- (5) How is the department/agency following the advice? How is this monitored? If the guidelines are not being followed, 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 total costs of the lounge memberships.
- (7) 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.
- (8) Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer:

- (1) Nil.
- (2) The office does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow it to answer these questions without an unreasonable diversion of resources. The Office complies with the ‘best fare of the day’ requirement when booking travel. Accommodation is booked using pre-determined limits. Travel allowance is set under our Office Enterprise Agreement. Travel is undertaken to fulfil our role in relation to our statutory obligations and international program activities. The total office expense for travel year to date January was \$395,327.51.
- (3) The office does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow it to answer these questions without an unreasonable diversion of resources.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Consistent with Government policy, the Office aims to achieve airfare savings and broadcasts these policies to staff via travel procedures and guidelines on the intranet. Reports from travel providers are used to assist with compliance monitoring.
- (6) Yes. Membership of QANTAS lounges are provided to the following staff:

Staff level	No. of staff	Sum of Joining, Transfer or Annual Renewal Fee
APS5	1	\$40
APS6	2	\$580
EL1	3	\$870
EL2	6	\$1740
SES1	4	\$1160
Grand Total	16	\$4390

Reasons for the provision of lounge memberships vary, but relate to the remoteness of travel destinations, and the frequency and timing of travel – eg: staff undertaking inspections of remote immigration detention facilities.

- (7) No.
- (8) No.