

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 11-14 February 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Office of National Assessments

**Outcome/Program:** 1

**Topic:** Travel Costs

**Senator:** 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:**

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).

**ONA Response:**

No Departmental officers accompanied the Prime Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel.

**Question:**

For the financial year to date, please detail all 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.

**ONA Response:**

- The total Office of National Assessments (ONA) cost for domestic travel expenses from 1 July 2012 to 31 January 2013 is \$63,700. This includes 74 domestic trips.
- The total ONA cost for international travel expenses from 1 July 2012 to 31 January 2013 is \$421,400. This includes 52 international trips.
- ONA officials fly economy class for domestic travel. SES officers fly economy for Sydney and Melbourne sectors and business class on all other domestic flights.
- ONA officials fly business class for international travel. There are occasions when international travel is taken in economy class due to availability and routing.
- ONA travel is related to the provision of assessments on international developments, including political, strategic and economic developments, which are reported to the Prime Minister, Senior Ministers and Senior Officials. Travel is also related to ONA being responsible for advancement of Australia's national interest through the effective coordination and elevation of Australia's foreign intelligence activities.
- ONA does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow more detailed answers to be provided to these questions. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

**Question:**

What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

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### **ONA Response:**

- It is estimated that 60 international trips between 1 February 2013 and 30 June 2013 will be undertaken at an estimated cost of \$486,200.
- ONA does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow more detailed answers to be provided to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

### **Question:**

What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

### **ONA Response:**

- ONA budget for approximately 120 international trips for the year.
- ONA does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow more detailed answers to be provided to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

### **Question:**

1. 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?
2. How is the department/agency following the advice?
3. How is this monitored?
4. If the guidelines are not being followed, please explain why.

### **ONA Response:**

1. Yes
2. The ONA Delegate has regard to the Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2012/04) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2012/05) guidelines to ensure they are being followed by ONA.
3. This is monitored by the monthly Whole of Australian Government compliance reporting that is received from the ONA travel provider.
4. N/A

### **Question:**

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.

### **ONA Response:**

Seven ONA officials have Qantas Club memberships at a total cost of \$950 per annum.

### **Question:**

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.

### **ONA Response:**

No.

### **Question:**

Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

### **ONA Response:**

No.