

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 27 MAY 2010 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Community Cabinet

Question reference number: HS44

Senator: BARNETT

Type of question: Written

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Question:

- a) What was the cost of Ministers travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held since Additional Estimates?
- b) How many Ministerial Staff and Departmental officers travelled with the Minister for the Community 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) As at 31 May 2010, three Community Cabinet meetings have been held since Additional Estimates 2010. The Minister for Human Services attended two of these meetings. The cost of travel and expenses was \$2,125.36.

Note 1 – 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.

Note 2 – Without consultation with the travellers, the information provided by DoFD relies on an assumption that all travel to and from relevant locations immediately before and after the relevant Community Cabinet meetings, was for the purposes of attending the meetings.

- b) As at 31 May 2010, the number of staff attending Community Cabinet meetings held since Additional Estimates 2010 was:

Meeting	Number of Ministerial staff	Number of Departmental staff
Ballarat VIC	1	3
Epping NSW	1	3
Burnie TAS ¹	1	2

- c) As at 31 May 2010, the total cost of travel and expenses for Ministerial and Departmental staff attending Community Cabinet meetings held since Additional Estimates 2010, noting the caveats below, was \$9,020.96.

Meeting	Ministerial staff travel costs	Departmental staff travel costs
Ballarat VIC	\$710.03	\$2,943.90
Epping NSW	\$0	\$2,353.85
Burnie TAS	\$1,186.59	\$1,826.59
TOTAL	\$1,896.62	\$7,124.34

Note 1 – 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.

Note 2 – Without consultation with the travellers, the information provided by DoFD relies on an assumption that all travel to and from relevant locations immediately before and after the relevant Community Cabinet meetings, was for the purposes of attending the meetings.

Note 3 – Departmental staff undertake site visits and other business meetings in the area when travelling to Community Cabinet meetings.

- d) The total cost of travel and expenses for Departmental officers was \$7,124.34 (excluding salaries) and for the Minister for Human Services and his staff was \$4,021.98.

¹ The Minister for Human Services did not attend the Community Cabinet meeting in Burnie Tasmania.