

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Budget Estimates Hearing 24 May-3rd June 2010

Question: PM67

Topic: Community Cabinets

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 July 2010

Number of pages: 3

- (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) The cost of ministerial travel falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance). Finance has advised that the cost of travel for ministers within the PM&C portfolio for Community Cabinet meetings since February 2010 Additional Estimates, which includes Community Cabinet meetings in Epping and Burnie (figures for Perth have not been included), noting the caveat below*, was as follows:

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig - \$ 5294.10

The Hon Anthony Byrne MP - \$ 572.42

* Finance advises that as Senators, Members and their employees have up to 60 days to submit travelling allowance claims, the information for the Burnie meeting of 19 May 2010 may be incomplete. Figures have not been included for the Perth meeting held on 9 June for this reason.

** Finance advises that the cost of attending Community Cabinet meetings cannot be disaggregated from travel to other destinations immediately before

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and after the meeting. Finance also notes that the figures do not include travel by taxis (exact locations are difficult to determine from information provided by Cabcharge) or travel on Special Purpose Aircraft (SPA), which is administered by the Department of Defence (Defence). Defence has advised that the cost of flights for the SPA is published and tabled every six months in the Schedule of Special Purpose Flights.

- b) The Community Cabinet Secretariat does not record how many ministerial staff travel with ministers for Community Cabinet meetings. The Secretariat does not record the number of departmental staff who travel with ministers except in respect of PM&C officers who attend Community Cabinet. In general there are sixteen staff that provide meeting organisation and logistics (eight members of the Secretariat and eight volunteers from the department), and one member of the Executive (either the Secretary or a Deputy/Associate Secretary) who supports the Prime Minister at one-on-one meetings.
- c) As noted in part (a) of this answer, the cost of travel by ministers and their staff for Community Cabinet meetings falls within the portfolio responsibilities of Finance. As noted also in (a) travel on SPA is administered by Defence and the cost of flights for the aircraft is published and tabled every six months in the Schedule of Special Purpose Flights. Finance has advised that the total cost of travel for ministers and their staff within the PM&C portfolio to attend Community Cabinet meetings held since the February 2010 Additional Estimates, noting the caveat below*, is as follows:

Prime Minister's office - \$ 20,741.37

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig - \$ 11,830.89

The Hon Anthony Byrne MP - \$ 1,376.84

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* * Finance advises that this information relies on an assumption that all travel to and from locations immediately before and after Community Cabinet meetings was for the purpose of attending those meetings and/or closed Cabinet meetings held in Community Cabinet locations. We understand many ministers take the opportunity to undertake other activities in the region.

The cost of travel for departmental officers is the responsibility of the relevant department. The cost of travel for departmental officers from PM&C to Community Cabinet meetings held since the February 2010 Additional Estimates is as follows (as at 15 June 2010*):

Epping (April 2010)	\$18,657
Burnie (May 2010)	\$26,771
Perth (June 2010)	\$41,605

* These are the available costs, and estimates of costs where final figures are not yet available

- d) There have been three Community Cabinet meetings held since the February 2010 Additional Estimates and total costs for the Department as at 15 June 2010 amount to \$246,145 (excluding salaries). As noted in parts a) and c), costs incurred by ministers and their staff to attend Community Cabinet meetings are the responsibility of Finance. Details of these costs have been provided by Finance and are outlined in a) and c) above. Costs incurred by departments to attend meetings are the responsibility of the relevant department.