

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012

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: Prime Minister’s spouse/partner – reporting of travel costs

Senator: Fifield

Question reference number: 36

Type of question: Hansard, p 84, 23 May

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 8 July 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Mr Terrell: Just to be clear, for all official travel for Mr Mathieson and the Prime Minister, PM&C will pick up the costs other than, as we indicated domestic flights.

...

Senator FIFIELD: Given that the department covers these ground transport costs, are they periodically reported? For instance, for members of parliament, their staff and their spouses, the costs that they incur through Department of Finance and Deregulation entitlements are periodically tabled in the parliamentary. Do you know how those equivalent costs for prime ministerial spouses that are picked up by PM&C are publicly reported?

Mr Terrell: We are not aware of any reporting that has occurred in this area for Mr Mathieson or any other former prime ministerial spouse.

Senator FIFIELD: That would be information that you would have.

Mr Terrell: Yes.

Senator FIFIELD: Is there information that could be made available to the committee?

Mr Terrell: I would probably have to take it on notice, but yes.

Answer:

As clarified at page 17 of the F&PA Hansard of 24 May 2011, the department is not responsible for the costs associated with the overseas travel by the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister’s partner. These costs, as with other ministers, are met by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance).

Domestic travel arrangements for the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister’s partner are also handled by Finance; the department (PM&C) is responsible for the costs of official cars for the Prime Minister and her partner. The Prime Minister’s partner has access to official cars when accompanying the Prime Minister or, for travel when not accompanying the Prime Minister, where he is attending an official function.

While the costs incurred by the department are not routinely publicly reported, in the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 May 2011, the department incurred costs of \$1,676.25, excluding GST, for official cars for the Prime Minister's partner when Mr Mathieson was not accompanied by the Prime Minister.