

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

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 3/3.1

Topic: Community Cabinet

Senator: Kroger

Question reference number: F129

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 6 July 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) What was the cost of all Ministers' travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held this financial year (2011-12)?
- b) How many Ministerial Staff travelled with the Foreign Affairs Minister for the Community Cabinet meetings for this financial year to date? What was the total cost of this travel?

Answer:

a) The cost of Ministers' travel and expenses paid as at 30 April 2012, for the Community Cabinet meetings held in Yeronga, Queensland (1 September 2011); Kingston, Tasmania (3 October 2011); Werribee, Victoria (9 November 2011) and Parramatta (4 April 2011) is \$49,006.70. As the report is for costs paid as at 30 April 2012, information about the Community Cabinet meeting held in Berwick (16 May 2012) is not included. Without consultation with the travellers, the information relies on an assumption that travel to and from relevant locations immediately before and after the Cabinet meetings was for the purpose of attending the Cabinet meetings. Some fare costs include additional destinations. Given the nature of the flight bookings, the cost of the additional destinations is not able to be disaggregated from the costs of travel to attend Community Cabinet meetings. Fare costs are GST exclusive.

The figure includes airfares and Travelling Allowance (TA) claims. As travellers have up to 60 days to lodge TA claims, not all claims may have been received by the 30 April 2012 reporting date. It does not include travel by taxis (due to the difficulties determining exact destinations using the electronic information as provided by Cabcharge), COMCAR (which is charged directly to portfolio agencies), or travel on Special Purpose Aircraft (which is administered by the Department of Defence).

b) The Department of Finance and Deregulation does not receive information about the purpose of official travel undertaken by staff employed under the *Members of Parliament Staff (Act) 1984*.

However, assuming that staff travelling to the destination where Community Cabinet meetings were held, were travelling for that purpose, six staff travelled with the former and current Minister for Foreign Affairs at a cost of \$6,813.11.

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