

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 27-28 May 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of National Assessments

Outcome/Program: 1

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 96

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 July 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

For the financial year to date, please detail all 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 May 2013 is \$102,179. This includes 148 domestic trips.
- The total ONA cost for international travel expenses from 1 July 2012 to 31 May 2013 is \$822,215. This includes 115 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 evaluation 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.

ONA Response:

- ONA estimates 18 international trips will be undertaken in June 2013 budgeted at \$195,000. ONA travel is related to the provision of assessments on international developments, including political,

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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 evaluation of Australia's foreign intelligence activities.

Question:

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

ONA Response:

- Approximately 80 international trips are planned for the rest of this calendar year. 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 evaluation of Australia's foreign intelligence activities.

Question:

What is the policy for business class airfare tickets? Is there still a reduction in business flights as per the media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State dated 25 September 2012?

ONA Response:

- SES officers fly economy class for Sydney and Melbourne sectors, and business class all other flights. All other ONA officials fly economy class for domestic, and business class for international flights.
- ONA has reduced the overall cost of travel in line with the Whole of Australian Government arrangements, whilst continuing to meet essential travel requirements.

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.