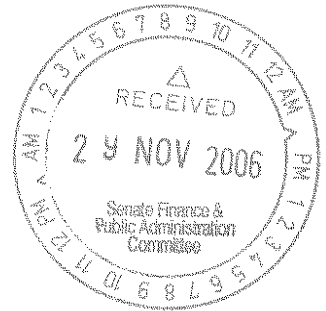




Australian Government
Department of Finance and Administration



Reference: PIG06/02025-4
Contact: Carolyn Hughes
Telephone: 6215 3711
e-mail: carolynhughes@finance.gov.au

Mr Alistair Sands
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Finance
and Public Administration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sands

**PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS – ANSWER TO QUESTIONS
RAISED AT SENATE ESTIMATES HEARINGS**

I refer to your email of 3 November 2006 in which you provide me with a copy of a letter from Mr Ian Harris, Clerk of the House, regarding evidence on parliamentary delegation travel provided to the Committee on Tuesday, 31 October 2006 by Ms Carolyn Hughes.

From examination of the Hansard evidence you will note that Senator the Hon Robert Ray raised the issue of travel warrants in a general question and that Ms Hughes' responses were couched in similar general terms. Ms Hughes did not have details of any specific delegation available at the hearing.

I note also that the Clerk of the House provided a copy of a letter from the Parliamentary Relations Office (PRO) to Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) of 25 August 2006, advising of the official itinerary for the Parliamentary Delegation to South Africa from 29 September to 5 October 2006.

I am advised that M&PS did not proceed to issue travel warrants or calculate allowances as we became aware that there was to be a change in the official itinerary for one of the delegates. M&PS sought a copy of the revised itinerary in an email to the PRO on 18 September 2006 (copy attached). On 21 September 2006 the PRO replied by email advising of a variation to the official itinerary for Mr Stewart McArthur MP (copy also attached). The final itinerary for Mr McArthur was received on 26 September 2006.

Finalisation of this itinerary was the trigger for M&PS to issue travel warrants for all members of the delegation and prepare letters to delegates with details of allowance payments and other financial arrangements. Due to the lateness in finalising arrangements, these letters were provided to the Committee Secretary to distribute to delegates.

Ms Hughes' advice to the Committee appears to me to be correct and not require amendment.

In an endeavour to avoid delays in the future, M&PS proposes not to wait for the confirmation of the official itinerary for all delegates before providing letters of advice to individual delegates.

I would appreciate it if you could bring this letter to the attention of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jan Mason', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Jan Mason
General Manager
Ministerial and Parliamentary Services
27 November 2006

Hughes, Carolyn

From: MPS.overseas
Sent: Monday, 18 September 2006 3:19 PM
To: 'Way, Fiona (Reps)'
Subject: Delegation to South Africa

Fiona

I don't suppose you have any final details for the delegation to South Africa next week? If so, could you please email them through.

Thanks

Alex

Alexandra Petridis
Overseas Travel
Ministerial and Parliamentary Services
Department of Finance and Administration
PH: 02 6215 2911
FAX: 02 6267 3086
EMAIL: alexandra.petridis@finance.gov.au

From: Witheridge, Lyn (REPS) [Lyn.Witheridge.Reps@aph.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 21 September 2006 12:31 PM
To: MPS.overseas
Subject: RE: Joint Ctee on Intelligence and Security - travel to South Africa

My apologies:

Mr McArthur's arrival into Capetown should read 21:10, not 20:10. Sorry - typing fingers not working!

Lyn

-----Original Message-----

From: Witheridge, Lyn (REPS)
Sent: Thursday, 21 September 2006 11:00 AM
To: 'mps.overseas@finance.gov.au'
Subject: Joint Ctee on Intelligence and Security - travel to South Africa

Good morning:

Further to my letter dated 25 August 2006, I am writing to advise that the Presiding Officers have approved a variation to the official itinerary for Mr Stuart McArthur. Could you please adjust Mr McArthur's allowances accordingly. He is planning to be accompanied by his wife. As soon as the certification form for her has been received, I will onforward a copy to you.

Mr McArthur will travel as follows:

Sunday 1 October

11:50 Depart Perth
South African Airways Flight SA281
17:20 Arrive Johannesburg
19:00 Depart Johannesburg
South African Airways Flight SA367

20:10 Arrive Cape Town

Thursday 5 October

11:40 Depart Cape Town
South African Airways Flight SA332
13:40 Arrive Johannesburg
16:40 Depart Johannesburg
South African Airways SA280

Friday 6 October

08:20 Arrive Perth

With thanks and regards,

Lyn Witheridge
Assistant Director
Parliamentary Relations Office
Tel: 02 6277 4367
Fax: 02 6277 2000