

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION SERVICE

Question No. 67

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 26 May 2011:

Senator BARNETT: As to credit cards, are departmental credit cards provided to members of the media and communications unit?

Mr Pezzullo: I would have to check the detail of that.

Senator BARNETT: When you do could you check who has the cards, what is the expenditure limit, what expenses are placed on the credit cards and who authorises the expenditure?

Mr Pezzullo: If I am able to make that available, I will.

Senator BARNETT: Can you provide a summary of the expenditure items of those cards for 2009-10 and then 2010-11 to date?

Mr Pezzullo: If that is able to be provided, I will make it available.

Senator BARNETT: Then the estimated by way of departmental credit card expenditure for the next financial year, if you have got that information?

Mr Pezzullo: I am sorry, on credit cards or just generally?

Senator BARNETT: No, credit cards.

Mr Pezzullo: I am not sure that we forecast in that way, but if I have got any data that goes to that I will make it available if I am able to.

Senator BARNETT: Additional expenses that have been met directly by the department in the media and communications unit for entertainment and hospitality; I am sure you would have a figure for that.

Mr Pezzullo: Those things are very carefully controlled so I cannot imagine that there would not be data on that, so if there is data that I can make available I will.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

There are nine credit cards on issue to members of the Communications and Media Unit.

Expenditure for each individual card holder is as follows:

Credit Card Owner	Transaction Limit	Actual Expenditure 2009-10	Expenditure Items	Actual Expenditure 2010-11	Expenditure Items
Program Communications Manager	\$10,000	\$498	External training	\$3,775	External training
Program Communications Manager	\$5,000			\$1,123	Public relations and advertising
Director , Communication	\$10,000	\$3,083	External training	\$388	Stationery
Program Communications Manager	\$10,000			\$3,152	Public relations and advertising, printing and

					publications and OH&S programs
Credit Card Owner	Transaction Limit	Actual Expenditure 2009-10	Expenditure Items	Actual Expenditure 2010-11	Expenditure Items
Regional Media Officer, NSW	\$5,000			\$245	Taxi fares
Director, Media	\$10,000			\$5,864	External training, Professional memberships, Taxi fares
Media Manager*	\$10,000			\$1,043	External training
Program Communications Manager	\$5,000	\$18,548	Recruitment & selection costs, External training, Taxi fares	\$15,583	Recruitment & selection costs, External training, Taxi fares
Media Manager				\$136	Taxi fares

* This card has been cancelled since the Estimates Hearings of 26 May as the officer has moved positions.

The type of expenses placed on departmental credit cards are generally low value purchases, in line with the requirements of the agency's Chief Executive Instructions.

All credit card holders have spending delegations as prescribed under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* up to their credit card limit. Credit card expenditure is authorised within the Agency's Financial Management Information System by a separate spending delegate whose delegation exceeds the amount to be authorised.

In response to question 1 (c), total expenditure for these cards for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 May 2011 is \$31,309 and \$22,128 in 2009-10. The majority of expenditure year to date has been on external training courses. Other items of expenditure include public relations and advertising, printing and publications and taxi fares.

In response to question 1 (d), Customs and Border Protection does not specifically budget by "Credit Card". Credit cards are used as an efficient payment mechanism for low value, low risk procurement transactions. Given past expenditure patterns we would expect similar levels of expenditure to be incurred in the future.

In response to question 2, the Communications and Media unit has not met any expenditure directly for entertainment and hospitality in either 2009-10 or year to date 2010-11.