

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

**Question: E12-129**

**OUTCOME 0:** Whole of Portfolio

**Topic:** Taxi Costs

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Number of pages:** 2

**Senator:** Senator McKenzie

**Question:**

- a) How much did each department/agency spend on taxis this financial year to date?  
Provide a breakdown of each business group in each department/agency.
- b) What are the reasons for taxi costs?

**Answer:**

- a) The table below shows the total cost of taxi fares, for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 May 2012, by division.

<b>Division</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Executive	\$31,580
DoHA Officers located in Ministers' Offices	\$2,072
Audit and Fraud Control	\$10,476
Acute Care	\$31,366
Ageing and Aged Care	\$98,496
Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance	\$120,661
Aged Care Commissioner	\$7,249
DoHA National Alignment	\$207
Medical Benefits	\$43,331
People, Capability and Communication	\$47,075
Health Workforce	\$23,429
OATSIH	\$57,551
Office of the Chief Information and Knowledge Officer	\$532
Office of Health Protection	\$36,946
Pharmaceutical Benefits	\$35,206
Population Health	\$57,271
Portfolio Strategies	\$28,283
Primary and Ambulatory Care	\$44,884
eHealth	\$35,388

Division	Amount
Regulatory Policy and Governance	\$58,784
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	\$9,512
ICT and Corporate Support	\$30,990
Legal and General Counsel	\$6,491
Mental Health and Drug Treatment	\$43,910
Health Reform Transition Office	\$4,410
Business Process Reform Unit	\$133
Australian and New Zealand Therapeutic Product Authority	\$2,119
Therapeutic Goods Administration	\$116,870
National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme	\$20,695
Office of Gene Technology Regulator	\$9,764
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,015,683</b>

<sup>1</sup> The department does not record the reasons for taxi usage in a way that would readily provide an accurate breakdown of taxi usage. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

- b) Taxi's are primarily used by staff and committee members undertaking official interstate travel, for essential travel to/from business meetings with external entities and emergency situations concerning a staff members welfare or safety.

The guiding principles for staff utilising taxi services are outlined in Finance Business Rule Section 7.6 titled 'Taxi Services'. Paragraph 7 states that 'it should be remembered that the use of taxis is spending public moneys and should be justifiable. The guiding principle when using taxis is cost effectiveness and overall efficiency. The department should receive "value for money" and staff should consider all options of travel.'

The department has established a network of video conferencing suites in central office and state and territory offices. Some of the benefits to staff will be to reduce lost productivity from time spent travelling, and help staff support more efficient travel practices which includes reducing taxi costs.