

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Cross Portfolio

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000383

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Travel costs

Since the change of Prime Minister on 14 September, 2015:

1. Is the minister or their office or their delegate required to approve all departmental and agency international travel?
2. If so, under what policy?
3. Provide a copy of that policy.
4. When was this policy implemented?
5. When is the minister notified, when is approved provided?
6. Detail all travel (domestic and international) 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).
7. 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.
8. What date was the minister or their office notified of the travel?
9. What date did the minister or their office approve the travel?
10. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

Answer

The Minister is not required to approve all international travel.

The Department's travel system does not record data in a way that identifies departmental officer travel accompanying the Minister. Identifying such travel would require a manual inspection of all travel records which would be an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

For the period 14 September to 31 January the total cost of travel has been \$1,250,623. The breakdown of expenses is: \$633,709 for airfares, \$314,663 for accommodation and \$302,249 for other costs.

The Department does not specifically plan for individual travel. Travel is one cost of the Department's business of policy and programme administration. Travel is undertaken for a range of purposes including to meet with service providers or grant recipients for compliance or administration purposes, and to consult on government policies and programmes.