

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Fair Work Building and Construction

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000153

Senator Cameron asked on 02 June 2015 on proof Hansard page 115

Relates to previous Department of Employment Question No EM1529_15, EM1517_15 and EMSQ15-000006.

Question

FWBC - Boardroom meetings

Senator CAMERON: Mr Hadgkiss, I want to go back to the question on notice I put to you in relation to the meetings that you had in boardrooms. Do remember that discussion?

Mr Hadgkiss: Yes.

Senator CAMERON: I asked question EM1529_15. You decided to take that on notice. In your response you indicated that it would be 'an unreasonable diversion of agency resources' to answer the question.

Mr Hadgkiss: Right.

Senator CAMERON: In the answer you also went on to say that you—not you; the agency—spent \$782,440 on travel and \$146,820 on public affairs and media.

Mr Hadgkiss: That is my answer.

Senator CAMERON: You still are arguing that it would be an unreasonable diversion of agency resources. You do understand that that is not an acceptable argument to put to the estimates committee, to not answer a question, don't you?

.....
PAGE 117

CHAIR: I will now report on the private meeting. As outlined in previous rulings, Senator Cameron has asked a question of Mr Hadgkiss. Mr Hadgkiss has taken that on notice and will endeavour to go back and obtain the answer to that question—diligently. If Senator Cameron has any issue with the answer to that question, in particular with respect to the unreasonable diversion of resources aspect, he will bring that to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee and we—particularly me as chair—will formally deal with that.

Answer

FWBC does not collate the level of data requested in EM1529_15.

FWBC has no mechanism which centrally records details of speaking engagements and conferences attended by the Director or and/or Senior Executive Service officers such as dates or locations, or the sponsors or organisers of the events. Therefore, the only way this information could be obtained would be to have each SES officer review all travel details manually, which would result in an unreasonable diversion of resources. Additionally, the departure of SES level personnel limits FWBC's access to accurate records of SES activities and ability to provide accurate information.

The cost of travel figures provided in the response EMSQ15-000006 are to the most detailed level available to the agency with the current software. The travel expenses included within the EMSQ15-000006 may include, but are not limited to:

- airfares;
- booking fees for airfares;
- public transport (travel by public train, tram, bus etc);
- taxi;
- rental cars;
- parking;
- mileage allowance;
- vehicle lease;
- road tolls;
- accommodation;
- travel allowances; and
- meals and other related incidentals.

Notably, this figure also includes travel expenses for external members of FWBC boards, including the Advisory Board.

The information requested is made more problematic in that the Director and/or the SES officers will invariably travel to:

- an event by sharing taxis, vehicles, tolls etc with each other or other staff members; and
- a particular location for several purposes, rendering impossible the accurate apportioning of travel costs to the information sought.

FWBC can confirm that the general purpose of its Director and/or Senior Executive Service officers attending events is to promote the work of the agency and/or engage with stakeholders. Copies of speeches made by the Director were provided as per EMSQ15-000010.