

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES (SUPPLEMENTARY HEARINGS) 2013-2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

Outcome/Program:

Outcome 1. Fair and accountable administrative action by Australian Government agencies by investigating complaints, reviewing administrative action and inspecting statutory compliance by law enforcement agencies.

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator: Senator Ludwig

Question reference number: 170

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 3

Question:

- (1) For the financial year to date, please detail all travel 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).
- (2) For the financial year to date, please 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.
- (3) What travel is planned for the rest of the financial year from 7 September 2013? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- (4) What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- (5) What is the policy for business class airfare tickets?
- (6) Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the total costs of the lounge memberships.

- (7) When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of the support staff travel.
- (8) Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer:

- (1) For the financial year to date, Office staff did not conduct any travel accompanied by the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary.
- (2) The Office does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow it to answer these questions without an unreasonable diversion of resources. The Office complies with the 'best fare of the day' requirement when booking travel. Accommodation is booked using pre-determined limits. Travel allowance is set under the Office Enterprise Agreement and travel policies are made in accordance with the Whole of Australian government travel arrangements. Travel is undertaken to fulfil our role in relation to our statutory obligations and international program activities. The total Office expense for travel as at the end of November 2013 was \$192,124.44. The break-down is as follows:

Type	\$
Domestic Airfares	78,794.47
Domestic Accommodation	39,938.22
Domestic Travel Allowance	39,058.41
Overseas Airfares	5661.60
Overseas Accommodation	3,336.24
Overseas Travel Allowance	25,335.50
TOTAL TRAVEL	192,124.44

- (3) From 7 September 2013 to the end of this financial year, the Office has planned travel in relation to its statutory obligations and international program activities.
- (4) From 7 September 2013 to the end of this calendar year, the Office has planned travel in relation to its statutory obligations and international program activities.
- (5) As per the Office Enterprise Agreement, economy class travel will be the general standard used where an official is required to travel within Australia on official business. SES comply with entitlements provided within their employment instruments however, economy class travel is strongly encouraged and undertaken frequently by these officers.

- (6) The Office provides QANTAS or Virgin lounge memberships to staff in relation to remoteness of travel destinations and the frequency and timing of travel commitments. The Office provided 23 memberships per the table below at an average cost of \$264 each (\$6,072 total per annum).

Staff Classification	No. of Staff
SES	4
EL2	7
EL1	7
APS 6	3
APS 5	2
Grand Total	23

- (7) When Office SES employees travel, no support or administrative staff (such as an Executive Assistant) travel with them.
- (8) The Office has not elected to offset emissions for employees work related travel.