

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 128

Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates

Outcome: Corporate

Programme: Corporate Strategies Division

Topic: Portfolio Wide – Travel Costs

Hansard Page: N/A

Question Date: 27 November 2013

Question Type: Written

Senator Ludwig asked:

- a) 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).
- b) 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.
- c) What travel is planned for the rest of from 7 September 2013? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- d) What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
- e) What is the policy for business class airfare tickets?
- f) 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.
- g) 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.
- h) Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer:

Department of the Environment (the Department)

- a) The Department does not retain separate records of departmental officers travelling with or accompanying the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, therefore it is not possible to provide this travel data.
- b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Department's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
International Airfares	323,076
International Accommodation & Allowances	189,835
International Other Expenses	15,577
Domestic Airfares	780,299
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	835,952
Domestic Other Expenses	125,076
Total	2,269,815

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the Department's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

- c) Since 7 September 2013, 763 domestic trips and 55 international trips have been undertaken or planned for the remainder of this financial year. Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government's or the Portfolio's domestic and international interests and obligations are met.
- d) Since 7 September 2013, 466 domestic trips and 13 international trips have been undertaken or planned for the remainder of the 2013 calendar year. Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government's or the Portfolio's domestic and international interests and obligations are met.
- e) SES employees are entitled to business class travel, excepting Canberra-Sydney. Non SES employees are entitled to business class for international travel. There has been a general reduction in business class travel as the department has introduced the broad practice of SES officers most often travelling economy class on shorter routes, for example, Canberra-Melbourne.
- f) Yes; please refer to the table below. Lounge memberships are provided to SES employees as an entitlement within their Common Law Contracts, and to other employees who undertake frequent travel as part of their official duties. The department generally pays for the following lounge memberships at an average cost of \$230 (GST inclusive) each per annum. Some officers receive free membership in accordance with their frequent flyer status.

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Senior Executive Service	31
Executive Level	9
Australian Public Service	2

- g) The Department is unable to provide a definitive response as its records system does not support or capture this information, but it is not practice for Executive Assistants to accompany SES employees on their travel.

h) No.

Director of National Parks (DNP)

a) Not applicable.

b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government's or the Portfolio's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
International Airfares	44,777
International Accommodation & Allowances	7,886
International Other Expenses	1,690
Domestic Airfares	71,061
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	133,265
Domestic Other Expenses	8,371
Total	267,050

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the DNP's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

- c) Since 7 September 2013, 88 domestic trips and two international trips have been undertaken or planned for the remainder of this financial year. Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government's or the Portfolio's domestic and international interests and obligations are met.
- d) Since 7 September 2013, 88 domestic trips and two international trips have been undertaken or planned for the remainder of the 2013 calendar year. Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government's or the Portfolio's domestic and international interests and obligations are met.
- e) SES employees are entitled to business class travel, excepting Canberra-Sydney. Non SES employees are entitled to business class for international travel. There has been a general reduction in business class travel as the DNP has introduced the broad practice of SES officers most often travelling economy class on shorter routes, for example, Canberra-Melbourne.
- f) Yes; please refer to the table below. Lounge memberships are provided to SES employees as an entitlement within their Common Law Contracts, and to other employees who undertake frequent travel as part of their official duties. The DNP generally pays for the following lounge memberships at an average cost of \$230 (GST inclusive) per annum. Some officers receive free membership in accordance with their frequent flyer status.

g)

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Executive Level	3

h) The DNP is unable to provide a definitive response as our records system does not support or capture this information, but it is not practice for Executive Assistants to accompany SES employees on their travel.

i) No.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (the Authority)

a) Not applicable.

b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Authority's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
International Airfares	98,914
International Accommodation & Allowances	63,257
International Other Expenses	16,395
Domestic Airfares	273,282
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	296,474
Domestic Other Expenses	49,687
Total	798,009

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the Authority's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

c) Although not yet planned, further travel will occur this financial year to enable management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, in particular consultation of the Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment, as determined by resources available and business requirements. To date, 302 trips have been booked.

d) Although not yet planned, further travel will occur this calendar year to enable management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, in particular consultation of the Great Barrier Reef Region Strategic Assessment, as determined by resources available and business requirements. To date, 283 trips have been booked.

e) Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are entitled to business class travel. Non SES officers are entitled to business class travel for international travel.

- f) Yes; please refer to the table below. Qantas Club membership is provided to employees in accordance with the Authority's Workplace Agreement. Total cost of each membership is \$290 (GST inclusive) per annum. Some officers receive free membership in accordance with their frequent flyer status.

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Executive Level	4
Australian Public Service	9

- g) No.

- h) No.

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (the Trust)

- a) Not applicable.
- b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Trust's interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 01 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
Domestic Airfares	1,311
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	1,241
Domestic Other Expenses	2,304
Total	4,856

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the Trust's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

- c) No travel is currently planned although other travel may occur over the financial year as determined by resources and business requirements. Travel is undertaken to ensure the Trust's domestic obligations are met.
- d) No travel is currently planned although other travel may occur over the calendar year as determined by resources and business requirements. Travel is undertaken to ensure the Trust's domestic obligations are met.
- e) The Trustees (Board of Directors) level of travel is dictated by the Remuneration Tribunal determinations for Part Time Officers. The Executive Director's (CEO) terms and conditions entitle the office holder to Tier 1 travel under the Remuneration Tribunal 'Official Travel by Office Holders' Determinations'. The Trust's Enterprise Agreement only provides staff the entitlement of economy class travel within Australia and business class travel for direct overseas flights. All eastern seaboard journeys are economy class.

- f) No.
- g) No.
- h) No.

National Water Commission (the Commission)

- a) Not applicable.
- b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Commission's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure in this financial year to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
Domestic Airfares	59,498
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	23,321
Domestic Other Expenses	12,552
Total	95,371

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the Commission's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

- c) The following travel was planned as at 7 September for the remainder of this financial year. Other travel may occur in the remainder of the financial year for other official purposes related to Commission business.

Destination	Reason	Explanation
Albury NSW	Commission Meeting	Commission business
Canberra ACT	Commission Meeting	Commission business
Brisbane QLD	Forum	Attendance at Aboriginal Forum
Melbourne VIC	Conference	Attendance at Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering Report launch
Brisbane QLD	Business meeting	Meeting with Australian Water Research and Development Coalition
Brisbane QLD	Workshop	Compliance and Assurance workshop
Hobart-Melbourne-Canberra	Business Meeting	Meeting with Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and TAS Irrigation
Launceston TAS	Conference	Attendance at Emerging Water Markets case study presentation
Sydney NSW	Business Meeting	Meeting with Great Artesian Basin Coordinating Committee
Wagga Wagga NSW	Seminar	Attendance at Indigenous Seminar
Terrigal NSW	Conference	Attendance at The annual Local Government NSW Water Management Conference
Melbourne VIC	Business meeting	National Groundwater Information System meeting

Melbourne VIC	Business meeting	National Performance Report roundtable group meeting
Cairns QLD	Workshop	North Australia Triennial Assessment (TA) workshop
Brisbane QLD	Business meeting	OzWater committee meeting
Brisbane QLD	Conference	River symposium conference
Brisbane QLD	Business Meeting	TA environmental indicators meeting with Commissioners
Sydney- Brisbane- Melbourne- Perth	Business Meeting	TA meeting with states
Albury NSW	Seminar	Attendance at University of Melbourne seminar
Sydney- Melbourne- Adelaide	Business Meeting	Urban Futures consultation meetings
Brisbane QLD	Conference	Water in Mining conference
Sydney NSW	Conference	Water Recycling forum
Perth WA	Business meeting	Western Australia TA roundtable meeting
Sydney NSW	Business meeting	Water Information System of Tasmania meeting
Melbourne VIC	Workshop	Designing Water Markets for Environmental and Economics Outcomes workshop
Sydney NSW	Business meeting	Infrastructure Partnerships Australia Water Taskforce meeting
Sydney NSW	Training	Essentials of Finance for Non- Finance Managers
Canberra ACT	Business meeting	CEO interviews

- d) Travel will be undertaken for attendance at Commission meetings (three meetings are planned but details not as yet finalised) and for other official purposes related to Commission business.
- e) The Remuneration Tribunal determination for Commissioners and the Chief Executive Officer provides for these officials to travel at business class. The Commission's SES staff employment contracts include an entitlement for these staff to business class travel. Some officials and staff have elected to travel at economy class resulting in a reduction in the amount of business class travel which would otherwise have been undertaken.
- f) Yes; please refer to the table below. All SES staff are entitled to Commission sponsored lounge memberships. Non-SES staff who are estimated to travel at least on 12 occasions in any year may be provided with a Commission sponsored lounge membership for that year where the staff member is required to access business facilities. The total cost of memberships paid by the Commission was \$580 (GST inclusive).

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Executive Level	1
Australian Public Service	1

g) No.

h) No.

Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau)

a) Not applicable.

b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Bureau's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive), noting \$386,929 in travel has been funded by FMA Section 31 revenue.

Travel Expense	Amount \$
International Airfares	465,289
International Accommodation & Allowances	409,275
International Other Expenses	322
Domestic Airfares	653,380
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	1,363,135
Domestic Other Expenses	286,522
Total	3,177,923

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the Bureau's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

c) A range of domestic and international travel is planned to ensure the Australian Government's and the Bureau's operational requirements and Australia's international interests and obligations are met. The Bureau is unable to provide an estimate of the number of trips currently in the system or booked without unreasonable diversion of resources.

d) A range of domestic and international travel is planned to ensure the Australian Government's and the Bureau's operational requirements and Australia's international interests and obligations are met. The Bureau is unable to provide an estimate of the number of trips currently in the system or booked without unreasonable diversion of resources.

e) SES employees are entitled to Business Class travel, and generally do not do so for shorter legs (for example, Canberra-Sydney). The policy on class of travel (including Business Class travel) for non-SES Bureau staff is defined by the Chief Executive Instructions in Section 2.3 - Official Travel where sub-clauses 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 state:

- 1.3.2 – Officials required to travel on official overseas business are entitled to Economy Class travel, should the duration of the journey, excluding overnight stopovers where accommodation is provided, be less than or equal to eight hours continuous travel.

- 1.3.3 – Officials required to travel on official overseas business are entitled to Premium Economy Class travel, for any journey greater than eight hours in duration. Should Premium Economy not be available employees are entitled to Business Class travel.
 - The CEI is consistent with the Bureau's Enterprise Agreement 2011-14 which contains the identical text in sections 105.2 and 105.3 respectively. This policy on class of international travel is reinforced in the Bureau's internal guidelines and procedures.
- f) Yes; the Bureau paid for the following lounge memberships at a cost of \$290 (GST inclusive) each per annum to facilitate business for travellers required to undertake frequent business travel. The reduction in Bureau sponsored memberships is due to a change in Airline Membership Policy, which saw staff members choosing to pay for their own Airline Membership.

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Senior Executive Service	2
Executive Level	13
Australian Public Service	2

g) No.

h) No.

Clean Energy Regulator (the Regulator)

- a) Not applicable.
- b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Regulator's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
International Airfares	8,131
International Accommodation & Allowances	4,484
International Other Expenses	327
Domestic Airfares	75,156
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	69,168
Total	157,266

- c) Further travel is expected to be undertaken to conduct official Regulator business. The Regulator is unable to provide an estimate of the number of trips currently booked without unreasonable diversion of resources.

- d) Further travel is expected to be undertaken to conduct official Regulator business. The Regulator is unable to provide an estimate of the number of trips currently booked without unreasonable diversion of resources.
- e) SES employees are entitled to travel business class for domestic travel, with the exception of flights from Canberra to Sydney or Melbourne, where economy class must be purchased. Non-SES employees travel in economy class on all domestic flights. When travelling internationally, all employees are entitled to travel business class where available, noting that where international travel comprises of domestic flight segments these may be in either economy or business class in accordance with the Regulator's travel policy. In addition, the Chair and Members are entitled to travel first class internationally under the applicable Remuneration Tribunal determinations. The Regulator's travel policy states that travel should only be undertaken when it is the most effective way to achieve its business needs.
- f) Yes; please refer to the table below. Lounge memberships were provided to five employees from 1 May 2013 to 31 October 2013 with a total cost of \$2,330 (GST inclusive) to provide an appropriate work environment for frequent travellers.

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Senior Executive Service	1
Executive Level	4

- g) No.
- h) No.

Climate Change Authority (the Authority)

- a) Not applicable.
- b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Authority's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive). All domestic airfares were economy class.

Travel Expense	Amount \$
International Airfares	6,261
International Accommodation & Allowances	2,259
Domestic Airfares	8,030
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	2,852
Domestic Other Expenses	3,837
Total	23,239

- c) Travel may be undertaken to attend engagements relevant to the Authority's work that require in-person attendance. The Authority is unable to provide an estimate the number of trips currently booked without unreasonable diversion of resources.
- d) Travel may be undertaken to attend engagements relevant to the Authority's work that require in-person attendance. The Authority is unable to provide an estimate the number of trips currently booked without unreasonable diversion of resources.
- e) Authority officers (SES and Non SES) travel economy class using the Lowest Practical Fare for domestic travel. For international travel, officers are entitled to travel business class in accordance with the former DCCEE Official Travel Policy and Guidelines. Authority members on official business travel in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal's Determination 2004/03: Official Travel by Office Holders.
- f) No.
- g) No.
- h) No.

Murray-Darling Basin Authority (the Authority)

- a) Not applicable.
- b) Travel is undertaken to ensure the Australian Government or the Authority's domestic and international interests and obligations are met. The table below outlines travel expenditure for this financial year to date, 1 July to 31 October 2013 (GST inclusive).

Travel Expense	Amount \$
Domestic Airfares	32,627
Domestic Accommodation & Allowances	67,934
Domestic Other Expenses	44,449
Total	145,010

A more detailed breakdown of travel expenditure within the Authority's financial system is not available as it is not recorded below the above categories.

- c) At the 31 October 2013 there were 190 trips planned. The travel is being undertaken to progress agency business including the implementation of the Basin Plan, delivery of joint programs and attendance at governance committees.
- d) At the 31 October 2013 there were 190 trips planned. The travel is being undertaken to progress agency business including the implementation of the Basin Plan, delivery of joint programs and attendance at governance committees.
- e) Business class travel is only available domestically for flights to Perth and Darwin, and/or where use of these flights can demonstrate better business outcomes. The Authority's policy for business class airfare is consistent with the Finance Circular No. 2012/04 issued by the Department of Finance on Use of the Lowest Practical Fare for Official Domestic Air Travel.

- f) Yes; please refer to the table below. SES Officers are entitled to membership with one airline lounge membership as a condition of their contract of employment. Non-SES Officers are provided membership when they are required to travel on official business frequently and where such membership will assist the staff member in effectively performing their duties. The total costs for the period 1 July to 31 October were \$1,450 (GST inclusive).

Qantas Club Memberships	
Classification	Number
Senior Executive Service	7
Executive Level	22
Australian Public Service	4

- g) No.

- h) No.