

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Cross Portfolio

DEEWR Question No. EW0941_12

Senator Back provided in writing.

Question

Travel costs

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately,) undertaken by your portfolio Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses. 2. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for any Minister and Parliamentary staff that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff. 3. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff. 4. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each department and agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses. 5. Are employees taking the most direct route when travelling? If not, please explain why. 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 cost per employee. 7. When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as their 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.

Answer

Questions 1 and 2. Costs of official travel by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and their staff are met by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (Finance). Any questions regarding those costs or arrangements should be referred to DoFD.

3. The agencies in the Portfolio do not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided for this question.

4. To provide the requested level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of resources. The total cost of travel for the 2011-2012 financial year to 31 January 2012 and the associated number of trips are provided in the table below:

Dept/ Agency	2011-12 \$	2011-12 Trips
DEEWR	8,824,003	6,719
Australian Building and Construction Commissioner (ABCC)	716,153	530
Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority (ACARA)	151,402	259
Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)	933,858	955
Comcare	1,593,173	Not available
Fair Work Australia (FWA)	1,359,319	588
Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO)	1,716,433	1,964
Safe Work Australia (SWA)	265,746	287

* Comcare is unable to provide information regarding the number of trips.

5. All departmental and agency staff required to travel, take the route which best meets the needs of the portfolio in terms of ensuring maximum value to the Australian Government and the most efficient and effective way to achieve portfolio objectives.

6. Agency policies regarding the provision of lounge memberships is detailed below.

Agency	Policy
DEEWR	Delegate may approve where it is anticipated that eight or more business trips will be required to be undertaken in a twelve month period.
ACARA	Does not provide lounge memberships to employees.
ABCC	Delegate may approve following consideration a business case outlining frequency of travel and reasons for membership.
AITSL	Provided for all staff at or above Manager level.
Comcare	Delegate may approve following consideration a business case outlining frequency of travel and reasons for membership.
FWA	Delegate may approve following consideration a business case outlining frequency of travel and reasons for membership.
FWO	Delegate may approve where it is anticipated that 18 or more business trips will be required to be undertaken in a twelve month period.
SWA	Delegate may approve where it is anticipated that eight or more business trips will be required to be undertaken in a twelve month period.

A breakdown of the lounge memberships at 31 January 2012 is provided below.

Agency	Staff Class'n	QANTAS	Virgin	Other	Ave Cost
DEEWR	APS 1-3	1			171
	APS 4-6	132			
	EL1 & EL2	517	7		
	SES and Equiv	113	1		
ABCC	APS 4-6	27			145
	EL1 & EL2	12			
	SES and Equiv	9			

Agency	Staff Class'n	QANTAS	Virgin	Other	Ave Cost
AITSL	EL1 & EL2	11	4		360
	SES and Equiv	4	3		
Comcare	APS 4-6	19	3		330
	EL1 & EL2	30	9		
	SES and Equiv		2		
FWA	APS 1-3				333
	APS 4-6				
	EL1 & EL2	1		1	
	SES and Equiv				
FWO	APS 1-3	1			343
	APS 4-6	18			
	EL1 & EL2	38			
	SES and Equiv	2			
SWA	APS 1-3				98
	APS 4-6				
	EL1 & EL2	18			
	SES and Equiv	5	5		

No other Agency has paid for any lounge memberships.

The variation in costs YTD are primarily attributed to differences in renewal dates and therefore timing of annual fees.

7. DEEWR and portfolio agencies do not approve travel of support staff based on servicing SES officers.