

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Estimates

29 May 2012

Question: BR24

Topic: Tourism Research Australia Investment

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Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: I am happy to take those. I would like to move to Tourism Research Australia. How much is spent on Tourism Research Australia, and has that investment changed in the past three years?

Mr Clarke: I was asked at the opening of the hearing to respond to

Senator WATERS: I am sorry, I was a couple of minutes late. My apologies if you are repeating yourself.

Mr Clarke: To put it in context before Ms Madden gives you the details, I have briefed the committee that the department is going through a reduction in staffing at the moment in the order of 20 per cent.

Senator WATERS: Yes, I heard that it was from 81 to 70.

Mr Clarke: Yes. I have decided, in consultation with the minister, to keep TRA exempt from that, so the TRA budget allocation staffing is not affected. In terms of the actual budget allocation for TRA

Ms Madden: I do not have that number here, but it is consistent, as the secretary said, and we will provide the exact number to the committee on notice.

Senator WATERS: I had some questions about some other matters that Senator Bushby asked about, so I will skip over those. He touched on the tourism investment prospectus and a number of matters relating to that, being the five-year plan with Austrade and the monitor that is being set up. I am interested to know whether there has been any particular commitment to fund activities supporting that prospectus in the budget papers?

Mr Clarke: The costs of implementing that program are all met by the agencies and stakeholders, including our state and territory colleagues, as they fall. Austrade is funding their component of the program. Tourism Australia is funding their part from within their allocation. The states are contributing their part. There is no separate budget for this initiative and, similarly, TRAs research associated with it is incorporated into the TRA budget.

Senator WATERS: Can I seek those budget allocations from you?

Mr Clarke: We would have to take on notice to do an attribution, a bottom-up costing, of what is going into it.

Senator WATERS: That would be great. I hope that is not too much of an impost.

Mr Clarke: Certainly.

Answer:

Annual Government funding for Tourism Research Australia (TRA) has been maintained at around \$5.5 million over the past three years. TRA also receives external revenue from the States and Territories as well as through the sale of subscriptions and data. The table below outlines the TRA operating budgets from 2009-10 to 2011-12. Fluctuations from year to year are mainly due to variations in the amount of external TRA revenue received from the States and Territories.

	TRA Operating Budget
2009-10	\$8.2m
2010-11	\$8.8m
2011-12	\$8.5m

As indicated during the Estimates hearing, Tourism Research Australia staff numbers will at least be maintained at current levels in 2012-13 (i.e. there will be no staff reductions). The TRA budget for 2012-13 has not been finalised, however it is likely to increase with additional research funding to be provided to TRA through the Asia Marketing Fund announced by the Government in the 2012-13 Federal Budget.

Costs relating to the Tourism Investment Monitor will continue to be met from within the Tourism Research Australia budget and have not been specifically identified. These are primarily staff costs with a small amount of expenditure on data purchases.

Tourism Australia has allocated \$300,000 in 2012-13 towards activities to support the investment guide and partnership agreement with Austrade. These include: working with Austrade on the promotion of tourism infrastructure investment opportunities within Australia (using the investment guide, opportunities list, investment video, website and investment monitor); research into two specific areas of tourism investment (short term accommodation and leisure and attractions); familiarisation hosting of potential investors; investment event sponsorship and attendance; and developing further collateral such as the reprinting of the investment assets, maintenance and development of the website and other communication tools.

This budgeted amount is separate to the work that Austrade will conduct within the partnership agreement.