

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

**Program:** Australian Human Rights Commission

**Question No. SBE16/024**

**Senator Watt, Murray asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2016:**

Senator WATT: You will probably be familiar with some reports that emerged last year about expenses that were claimed by the former Human Rights Commissioner, Tim Wilson. There was quite a degree of concern about the size of those expenses Mr Wilson had claimed in that role.

Senator Brandis: Senator Watt, that is not the truth. The issue was raised; there was no concern expressed at all. When the matter was explored in this committee, it was revealed how relatively modest, compared to the expenses of other commissioners, the expenses were.

Senator WATT: Thank you, Senator Brandis. We had an extended debate about the meaning of the word 'consult' the other day; let's not get into an extended debate about the word 'concern'.

Senator Brandis: I just think it is important that you tell the truth when you put questions to witnesses.

Senator WATT: I am happy to table the report I am referring to. That report from July last year was that Mr Wilson had run up more than \$77,000 in taxpayer funded expenses in his first year on the job. Professor Triggs, are you able to advise the committee of the amount of taxpayer-funded expenses that Mr Wilson ran up in his second year on the job?

Prof. Triggs: I will have to take that on notice to give you precise details. I think you will notice that we have also answered earlier questions on notice that set out those sums and explain the circumstances in which the expenses were incurred.

Senator WATT: I am still getting across all of the answers to questions on notice that were tabled prior to the hearing, but I take it they include a breakdown of all expenses associated with Mr Wilson, including any family reunion travel or costs that were incurred?

Prof. Triggs: Absolutely. We gave quite a detailed response to the last questions on notice and we will do the same on this occasion in light of your question.

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

Expenses for the Human Rights Commissioner for the period 18/02/2015 to 15/02/2016

Item	Cost ex GST	Source of funds		
		Reunion Travel	AGD Free Speech Initiative	Reimbursement by third parties
Broadband/Telecom - No FBT	937.32	0	0	0
Consumables - Office	197.13	0	0	0
Portable & Attractive - IT	801.00	0	0	0
Postage & Freight - postage	84.66	0	0	0
Postage & Freight - freight	234.89	0	0	0
Maintenance & Repairs (ITC)	335.45	0	0	0
Reference materials & subs	2928.32	0	305.23	0
Telecoms - mobile calls	3142.72	0	0	0
Telecoms - service & equipment	4.30	0	0	0
Telecoms - wide area network	838.67	0	0	0

Training - conf/seminar/course	1382.08	0	227.27	0
Travel - Booking Fee Domestic	890.79	327.10	10.55	0
Travel - cabcharge	11921.65	4995.46	204.36	0
Travel - domestic airfare	22992.12	8333.63	1066.26	4098.74
Travel - AOT/accommodation	2863.29	0	623.78	153.63
Travel - domestic TA	2813.97	0	457.00	0
Hire - Motor Vehicles	1133.58	73.96	275.08	164.85
Travel - Domestic Other	523.62	77.27	0	0
Travel - Booking Fee International	710.42	403.00	0	0
Travel - overseas	17063.81	0	10752.12	5740.45
Travel - overseas allowance	9536.18	0	9536.18	0
Travel - International Other	2368.53	0	1804.89	0
Travel - Car parking	389.84	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>84094.34</b>	<b>14210.42</b>	<b>25262.72</b>	<b>10157.67</b>