

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - 27 FEBRUARY 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Travel Costs

Question reference number: HS 64

Senator: Ludwig

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 24 April 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) From 7 September 2013, 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) From 7 September 2013, 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 this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

Answer:

- a) In the course of departmental business, departmental officers and the Minister may attend the same event. Travel records normally do not record whether travel includes attending any events that the Minister has also attended.

On 16-17 October 2013, the Minister visited the departmental premises in Alice Springs and Yuendumu, Northern Territory. Departmental officers accompanied the Minister, with the following costs:

Date	Flight Type	Flights Costs	Accommodation	Meals & Incidentals	Total
16-17 Oct 13	Business, Economy & Charter	\$7,273.50	\$314.50	\$531.40	\$8,118.90

- b) An itemised list of all travel undertaken by the departmental officer would need to be generated manually and this would represent an unreasonable diversion of resources as there are approximately 10,518 individual trips for the period of 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014.

Expenditure is reported on from supplier reports which are provided on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. To continue with the integrity of the supplier data, figures have been reported from 1 September as opposed to 7 September, as obtaining information from 7 September would need manual intervention and represent an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Expenditure for staff travel for the period 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014 was \$4,684,638 (GST inclusive), noting that this includes bus, sea, rail, air charter travel, travel management and administrative fees.

The expenditure for staff domestic travel for the period 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014 was:

- \$4,080,757 for economy class travel; and
- \$387,101 for business class travel.

The expenditure for international travel for the period 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014 was \$17,743. Departmental officials fly business class when travelling overseas on official business.

The expenditure on travel-related fees for the period of 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014 was \$199,307.

Total expenditure on staff accommodation for the period 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014 was \$3,603,392 (GST inclusive). This expenditure represents close to all departmental accommodation expenditure, but excludes a small proportion of travel where commercial accommodation cannot be provided (often due to the remoteness of the location) and accommodation is sourced through the employee's own arrangements and therefore funded through travel related allowances.

Other travel-related costs cannot be separately itemised. Under the *Department of Human Services Agreement 2011-2014*, allowances for meals and incidentals are made as a single payment to the traveller.

- c) Travel plans are managed by local managers as needs arise. There is no central plan for travel to be taken for the calendar year throughout the department.