

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000158

**OUTCOME:** 0 - Whole of Portfolio

**Topic:** Travel Costs - Department

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Ludwig, Joe

**Question:**

Since the change of Prime Minister on 14 September, 2015:

1. Is the minister or their office or their delegate required to approve all departmental and agency international travel?
2. If so, under what policy?
3. Provide a copy of that policy.
4. When was this policy implemented?
5. When is the minister notified, when is approval provided?
6. Detail all travel (domestic and international) 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).
7. 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.
8. What date was the minister or their office notified of the travel?
9. What date did the minister or their office approve the travel?
10. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

**Answer:**

1. International travel proposals are approved in accordance with the whole of government official international travel policy issued by the Department of Finance.
2. Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405, *Official International Travel – Approval and use of the Best Fare of the Day* (RMG 405).
3. RMG 405 is available at the following web address (this is a web address only not a link) <http://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource-management-guide-no-405.pdf>
4. RMG 405 took effect from 27 February 2015.
5. In accordance with RMG 405, the Minister is advised of, and approves, travel proposals:
  - a. for the Secretary; and

- b. where the total cost of international travel for departmental officers is estimated to exceed \$50,000.
6. Table 1 outlines international travel undertaken by Departmental officers accompanying the Minister from 15 September to 28 February 2016. From 16-21 November 2015 the Secretary, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and three Departmental officers accompanied the Hon Sussan Ley, Minister for Health, on her visit to China; and the CMO and one departmental officer accompanied Minister Ley when she continued her trip to visit Indonesia.

**Table 1**

<b>Total Cost</b> (report at 29 February 2016)	<b>\$56,559.23</b>
Airfare (Business)	\$47,372.10
Accommodation	\$6,296.53
Other travel expenses – meals, travel allowances	\$2,890.60

Table 2 outlines domestic travel undertaken by Departmental officers accompanying the Minister from 15 September 2015 to 28 February 2016.

**Table 2**

<b>Total Cost</b> (report at 29 February 2016)	<b>\$3096.18</b>
Airfares (economy)	\$1678.74
Accommodation	\$536.00
Meals	\$599.80
Incidentals	\$281.64

7. Total travel for Departmental officials travel since 14 September 2015:

<b>Total Cost</b> (report at 29 February 2016)	<b>\$1,013,473.82</b>
Airfare (mixture of Business, Premium Economy, Economy fares utilised)	\$705,500.42
Accommodation	\$167,072.68
Other travel expenses – meals, travel allowances	\$140,900.72

Travel includes both domestic and international travel. International travel is related to the Department's obligations under Commonwealth legislation and international frameworks and treaties. This includes the Department's therapeutic goods regulatory role to ensure therapeutics manufactured overseas meet Australia standards. The Department participates in international meetings, including those of the World Health Organization, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Asia-Pacific Cooperation, to protect and promote Australia's health interests and to improve regional and global health outcomes.

8. The Minister was notified prior to travel, in accordance with RMG 405.
9. The Minister gave approval prior to travel, in accordance with RMG 405.
10. Travel for remainder of 2016 will be undertaken as required to support the Department's obligations under Commonwealth legislation, international frameworks and treaties, and to attend meetings to support the Government's Health, Sport and Ageing agendas.