

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES - 20 OCTOBER 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Travel Costs

Question reference number: HSW 26

Senator: McKenzie

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 December 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) For the year 2010-11, 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.
- b) For the year 2010-11, 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.
- c) For the year 2010-11, 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.
- d) For the year 2010-11, 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.
- e) For the FYTD, 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.
- f) For the FYTD, 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.
- g) For the FYTD, 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.

- h) For the year FYTD, 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.

Answer:

a), b), e) and f)

These arrangements are administered by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

c) and g)

DHS officials, although they attend some events that the Minister also attends and may travel with similar itineraries, do so in their capacity as officials, not for the purpose of accompanying the Minister. It is the role of Ministerial and Parliamentary staff to accompany Ministers when they travel.

Travel records do not identify travel to attend events which the Minister is also attending.

d) and h)

This information is provided in the response to Question on Notice HSW 49.

Business functions requiring substantial staff travel include disaster response and recovery, remote area servicing and major systems release testing and training.

Staff expenditure on meals while travelling and other travel-related items is covered by travel allowances outlined in agency Collective Agreements. No component of these allowances is for the provision of alcohol.

Total expenditure on staff accommodation provided for 2010-11 was \$1,542,913 for DHS (excluding CRS Australia), \$1,437,201 for Medicare Australia and \$14,289,816 for Centrelink. This represents close to all DHS accommodation expenditure, but excludes a small proportion of travel where commercial accommodation is not provided (often due to remote location) and accommodation is sourced through employees' own arrangements and therefore funded through allowances in Collective Agreements.

DHS staff employed under the CRS Australia Collective Agreement arrange their own accommodation while travelling and are paid a fixed allowance set down in that Agreement. The allowance also covers meals and other personal travel-related expenses, so CRS Australia accommodation costs are therefore not separately identifiable.

An itemised list of all aspects of travel undertaken by officials would need to be generated manually and this would represent an unreasonable diversion of resources.