

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2016
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 23

Program 1.1

Hansard Ref: Written, 24/10/2016

Topic: Credit Cards

Senator Gallacher, Alex asked:

1. What types of credit and transaction cards (including Cabcharge, Fastcard and eTickets) does your department issue?
2. What was the total expenditure for each type of card over the last 3 financial years?
3. Can you break down the expenditure into categories?
4. What is the highest and lowest credit limit for each type of card?
5. How many times in the last 5 years has the credit limit been reviewed?
6. What are Credit Cards used for?
7. What are the Governance/probity rules for employees to follow?
 - (a) Are cash advances allowed?
Can you list the total amount of cash advances from credit and other transaction cards over the last 3 years?
 - (b) Can you provide details on the 10 largest cash advances in your department and provide particulars such as how much was accessed?
 - (c) Who approves cash advances in your department in the event of paying suppliers
8. Who reviews transactions in regards to all cards?
9. Who provides assurance to the Minister in respect to probity governance and fraud control?

Answer:

1. The Department of Communications and the Arts issues its officers with Departmental credit cards and Cabcharge vouchers.

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2. The total expenditure on the two types of cards has been as follows:

Year	Departmental Credit Card	Cabcharge
2015-16	\$2,875,086	\$57,006
2014-15	\$2,260,626	\$56,599
2013-14	\$2,655,011	\$94,796

3. All the Cabcharge expenditure has been on taxis. The credit card expenditure, can be broken down into the following categories for the last three financial years:

Category	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Travel	\$1,726,149	\$1,061,528	\$1,201,919
Other	\$ 447,668	\$ 399,243	\$ 510,235
Staff Training	\$ 204,098	\$ 232,317	\$ 303,283
Conference\Meeting costs	\$ 116,319	\$ 174,576	\$ 182,249
Publications	\$ 91,936	\$ 138,998	\$ 136,892
Stationery	\$ 88,806	\$ 50,328	\$ 94,557
Telecommunications	\$ 55,163	\$ 61,080	\$ 51,050
Memberships/Subscriptions	\$ 52,229	\$ 47,786	\$ 46,793
Printing & Photocopying	\$ 49,374	\$ 70,639	\$ 67,559
Computer Equipment	\$ 43,344	\$ 24,131	\$ 60,474
Total	\$2,875,086	\$2,260,626	\$2,655,011

4. Cabcharge vouchers do not have limits. The limits on the Departmental credit cards range from \$10,000 to \$60,000.
5. Individuals are provided with standard credit limits. In some circumstances officers can request limits higher than the standard credit card limits after providing a business case to the Chief Financial Officer. Temporary increases to limits do occur from time to time for operational requirements, the credit limit is then returned to its original amount once the operational requirements has ceased.
6. Credit cards are the Departments preferred method of payment for all expenditure under \$10,000 (GST Inc).
7. Before officers are provided a card, they must:
- read the Department's Practical Guide on Commonwealth credit cards;
 - sign the card; and
 - read and sign the Card holders undertaking.

Cash advances are not permitted unless authorised by the Secretary or Chief Financial Officer. All cards are automatically blocked from cash withdrawals. Presently only one officer's card is enabled for cash advances and this is only for the purpose of reimbursing the Petty cash advance.

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- 7a. There has only been one withdrawal of \$820 to reimburse the petty cash advance.
- 7b. There has only been one withdrawal of \$820 to reimburse the petty cash advance.
- 7c. No supplier is paid via cash advance.
8. Each cardholder has a supervisor who is responsible for reviewing the transactions of card holders who report to them. They must ensure each transaction is a legitimate business transaction, has been acquitted correctly and appropriate evidence of the transaction has been maintained.
Additionally the Travel and Cards team conduct a number of quality assurance processes to review transactions to ensure cards are being used appropriately.
9. The Secretary as the Accountable Authority under PGPA Act provides the Minister with assurance that appropriate governance and fraud control measures are in place.