

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

13 – 14 February 2013

Question: AET 360-367

Topic: Travel Costs

Written: Received from Committee – 22 February 2013

Senator BUSHBY asked:

360. For the financial year to date (22 February 2013), please 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 includes airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
361. For the financial year to date (22 February 2013), please detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that includes airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals). Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
362. What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
363. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
364. Are the Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11) guidelines being followed? How is the department/agency following the advice? How is this monitored? If the guidelines are not being followed, please explain why.
365. Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and what is their classification, what is the reason for the provision of lounge memberships and the total costs of the lounge memberships.
366. When SES employees travel, do any support / administrative staff (such as an Executive Assistant) travel with them? If yes, provide details of why such a staff member is needed and the costs of their travel.
367. Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees' work-related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer:

360. ASIC officers have not accompanied the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel in the financial year to date.

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361. Travel expenses incurred by ASIC in the financial year to 22 February 2013 are detailed below:

Travel Expense Type	\$ excl GST
Domestic Airfares	\$863,156
Domestic Accommodation	\$577,071
Domestic Railfares & cab fares	\$401,421
Domestic Travel Allowance	\$182,438
Overseas Fares	\$155,072
Overseas Accommodation	\$33,110
Overseas Travel Allowance	\$20,401
Overseas Railfares & cab fares	\$6,930
Overseas Travel Expenses (Other Incidentals)	\$1,720
Total domestic and overseas related travel expenses	\$2,241,323

In relation to domestic travel, ASIC does not track expenditure against classes of flights; however, the travel policy outlines that all staff must travel Economy class for domestic travel with the exception of:

- Commissioners who are entitled to fly business class; and
- All Senior Executive who are entitled to fly business class on flights where the flight duration is greater than 2 hours.

For travel outside Australia, ASIC does not track expenditure against classes of flights; however, staff are entitled to travel business class for international travel, with the exception of Commission members who are entitled to fly first class. Note that although Commissioners are entitled to fly first class for international travel as per the Remuneration Tribunal Determinations, first class travel is only approved in exceptional circumstances and on medical advice.

ASIC employees required to travel on official business are paid a travel allowance unless meals are provided (for example, breakfast included as part of the accommodation cost). Therefore, ASIC does not record travel related food, beverage and entertainment costs. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

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ASIC employees are required to travel to undertake their business functions, domestic interagency meetings and international meetings with peer regulators.

The ASIC Domestic Travel policy states that "*Staff should only travel if they and their delegate consider that more cost effective alternatives, such as video conferencing and teleconferencing, are not appropriate*".

362. ASIC employee's domestic travel is dictated by business requirements at any given time and therefore, it is not possible to determine with any certainty a travel calendar for the rest of the financial year.

In terms of international travel, the Commission and some Senior Executive Leaders have international travel planned for the remainder of the year, largely to meet IOSCO commitments.

363. ASIC Chairman Greg Medcraft is travelling to China with the Hon Bill Shorten MP on 8-10 April for a high level superannuation and trade services delegation.
364. The Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2012/04) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2012/05) guidelines are being followed by ASIC staff with the LPF and Best Fare of the Day travel being booked unless there is a business reason not to do so. Adherence to these guidelines is monitored via monthly reporting provided to Senior Executives by ASIC's travel management provider.
365. ASIC's Domestic Travel policy states that only SES level or SES equivalent staff are entitled to airline lounge memberships, where it is cost effective to do so. The cost of these memberships are not recorded in a manner that enables us to respond fully to this question.
366. When SES travel, administrative or support staff do not travel with them unless there is an extraordinary business requirement.
367. ASIC does not elect to offset emissions for employees' work-related travel.