

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Treasury Portfolio
Budget Estimates 2014
3 June to 5 June 2014

Department/ Agency: Clean Energy Finance Corporation

Question: 2244-2246

Topic: Travel costs – Department

Reference: Written 12 June 2014

Senator: Ludwig

Question:

2244 Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, 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).

2245 Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, 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.

2246 What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

Answer:

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

2244 The CEFC is not a Department of State and has no departmental officers. If this question is intended for the Department it should be directed to the Department of the Treasury. If the question is intended for the CEFC notwithstanding the wording to the contrary, the answer is Nil.

2245 The question is answered at 1. above.

2246 The CEFC is not a Department of State and has no departmental officers. If this question is intended for the Department it should be directed to the Department of the Treasury.

If the question is intended for the CEFC notwithstanding the wording to the contrary, the answer is that the CEFC is responsible for servicing the nation from its offices in Sydney and Brisbane. This often involves both executive and non-executive operational-level travel to meet with project proponents and/or co-financiers, establish credentials and bona fides of proponents, negotiate investment terms and contracts, inspect projects and sites, conduct consultations with other stakeholders, market the CEFC's co-financed products, liaise with various levels of government and regulators, and attend conferences and other functions, and so on. The nature of the business means it is not possible to foresee which investment opportunities will require travel to the end of the calendar year.

In addition, inter-office travel occurs for the purposes of meeting clients, attending Board meetings, governing staff etc.

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To reduce costs, the CEFC uses the whole of government procurement service for air travel and accommodation. Approval to travel must be sought, and CEFC staff travel in economy class on air fares, on domestic travel (including the Executive who would otherwise be entitled under terms of engagement to travel at Business class).

International travel is kept at a minimum. Staff are not paid a travel allowance and must claim reimbursement for expenditure on items such as taxis, train fares and meals. All travel claims are capped well below Australian Tax Office thresholds which are usually used as a reference point across the Australian Government.

The CEFC has also installed and heavily uses a videolink system and teleconferencing facilities for communication between the Sydney and Brisbane offices and with customers where possible.

Cataloguing the subset of travel that is already planned in advance to the end of the calendar year would require an exercise in interrogation of each staff member. As capturing this information a) is not required and b) has no utility for the CEFC, attempting to collect this information would present an unnecessary diversion of public resources that would not meet the requirements of efficient, effective, economical and ethical usage per the *Public Governance and Accountability Act 2013*.