

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

Question: SBE 392-399

Topic: Travel costs (ATO)

Written: 29 November 2013

Senator LUDWIG asked:

392. For the financial year to date, 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 include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
393. For the financial year to date, please 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.
394. What travel is planned for the rest of the financial year from 7 September 2013? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
395. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year*? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.
396. What is the policy for business class airfare tickets?
397. Are lounge memberships provided to any employees? If yes, what lounge memberships, to how many employees and their classification, the reason for the provision of lounge membership and the total costs of the lounge memberships.
398. When SES employees travel, do any support or 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 the support staff travel.
399. Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

* From 7 September 2013

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Answer:

392. From 7 September to 30 November 2013, no ATO officers have been required to accompany the Minister on his travel.
393. For the period from 7 September to 30 November 2013 ATO expenditure on travel related costs (including the Australian Valuation Office, Australian Business Register, Tax Practitioners Board and Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission) was \$11.4 million.

A breakdown of this expenditure is provided in Table 1 below. Table 2 provides a breakdown of airfare expenditure by class.

Table 1: Travel related expenditure 7 September to 30 November 2013

Travel expenditure by category	(\$m)
Air travel	5.62
Travel Allowance Payments*	3.56
Taxi Fares	1.05
Fleet Costs	0.94
Other Incidental Travel Costs	0.19
TOTAL	11.36

*Travel allowance includes \$1.2 million for SES and EL2 accommodation.

Table 2: Airfare expenditure 7 September to 30 November 2013

Class	Economy (\$m)	Business (\$m)	First Class (\$m)	Total (\$m)
Domestic	3.00	2.36	-	5.36
International	0.02	0.24	0.02	0.28
Total	3.02	2.6	0.02	5.63

The ATO is a large organisation with offices around Australia and over 80 per cent of its staff located outside of Canberra. The need for the ATO to connect with staff, the community, businesses and tax professionals spread across the country necessitates official travel by employees in the course of their ordinary duties.

394. The ATO is unable to quantify or provide itemised data specifically related to what travel is planned for the rest of this financial year.
395. The ATO is unable to quantify or provide itemised data specifically related to what travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year.

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396. ATO policy provides SES employees with an entitlement to business class travel. On short trips, SES staff should consider travelling economy class to reduce costs. Additionally, EL2 employees are entitled to travel business class on flights greater than 1,600 air kilometres.
397. ATO policy allows for staff that are likely to undertake a certain number of return flights in the forthcoming 12 month period to receive an ATO-funded airline lounge membership. For general employees, the requisite number of return trips is 12 and for EL2 and SES employees, it is eight. The ATO does not fund airline lounge membership for staff who do not meet these criteria.

Table 3: 7 September to 30 November 2013 - ATO Lounge memberships

Lounge Memberships	7 September to 30 Nov 2013
Cost	\$42,174
Number	111

To attempt to provide the further details requested would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources

398. SES are not generally accompanied by support staff when they travel. There may be limited instances where staff in executive support roles are required to accompany SES staff on official travel to support the ongoing management of business functions.

The ATO records travel individually on the basis of complete trips, which may have multiple components and travel reasons. For this reason, the ATO is unable to provide data specifically related to travel for activities related to supporting SES.

399. No.