

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Treasury Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates
2014 - 2015

Department/Agency: CEFC

Question: SBT2271-2276

Topic: Travel costs - departmental

Reference: written - 30 October 2014

Senator: Ludwig, Joe

Question:

Since Budget Estimates in June, 2014:

2271. Is the minister or their office or their delegate required to approve all departmental and agency international travel?
- a) If so, under what policy?
 - b) Provide a copy of that policy.
 - c) When was this policy implemented?
2272. List all occurrences of travel that this has occurred under.A. Detail the process.
2273. When is the minister notified, when is approved provided?
2274. Detail all travel (domestic and international) 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).
2275. 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.
- a) What date was the minister or their office was notified of the travel?
 - b) What date did the minister or their office approve the travel?
2276. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

Answer:

2271. No.
- a) to c) Not applicable.
2272. Not applicable.
2273. Not applicable.
2274. 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.
2275. The question is answered at 2274 above.
2276. 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.

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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.

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 actual 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*.