

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000080

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked on 01 March 2017, Proof Hansard page 122

Also refer to previous hearing Question No. SQ16-001045

Federal grant made to Bjorn Lomborg centre

Question

Senator O'NEILL: You might recall that at the last estimates asked a series of questions around the federal grant that was made to the Bjorn Lomborg centre. There were a series of questions on notice. Thank you for the responses to those. I have to say that I was a little shocked, given the nature of the publication, in which we have discovered is essentially a vanity publication, that we paid \$640,000 for it in a grant to Mr Lomborg. Can you confirm this figure of \$146,000 for travel paid to Mr Lomborg?

Ms Hart: Regarding the response that was provided to breakdown of costs, the travel and meeting costs were \$146,296.76.

Senator O'NEILL: So of the \$640,000 that the Australian people paid Mr Lomborg, he spent \$146,000 on travel and meetings, including to places in Africa?

Ms Hart: I do not have the full breakdown of the places he travelled to. I could take that on notice.

Senator O'NEILL: Would you please do so? In your answer you say: Country specific seminars regarding the most effective targets for the post-2015 development agenda were held in—and you have listed here, amongst others that you might yet provide to me—...Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa. Youth Forums were also held across Africa, the AsiaPacific and Latin America. In addition, the Copenhagen Consensus Center took its project results to seminars in New York (USA). That sounds like a pretty good round-the-world trip to me.

Senator Birmingham: Is sounds like your question has already been answered, Senator.

Senator O'NEILL: Is that all he did, or is there more, Ms Hart? Did he have more of a good time on the Australian taxpayers' dollars than those countries I have listed already, for \$146,000? Is there anywhere else?

Ms Hart: That is the list of countries that were involved in the conduct of the project.

Senator O'NEILL: And they are the countries to which Mr Lomborg travelled?

Ms Hart: As I said before, I would need to take that on notice. There were forums and meetings where the results may have been passed to Dr Lomborg. I would need to take on notice which ones he personally attended.

Senator O'NEILL: In relation to the contract service 'professional fees—research', at \$192,000, could you also find out for me what constituted that amount? In relation to outreach \$152,000 and forums \$137,000, could you get a more detailed breakdown of what they were for? Given that Mr Lomborg was the publishing agent through the Copenhagen Consensus Center, and the printing and copying of this book that cost us \$640,000 only seems to be indicated as \$9,444—is that the cost for the printing of the book?

Ms Hart: That is my understanding, yes. The \$640,000 covered a range of activities. It does not relate just to the cost of the book.

Answer

The Copenhagen Consensus Center (CCC) has advised that this expenditure item supported among other things, expenses for Dr Lomborg's travel to summits in the following countries: Australia; Bangladesh; Brazil; Canada; Colombia; Denmark; Germany; India; Indonesia; Kenya; Mexico; Nigeria; South Africa; Tanzania; the United Kingdom; and the United States.

The \$146,296.76 for travel and meeting costs was not used solely for travel and accommodation for Dr Lomborg but also to meet costs associated with reporting the deliberations and work by other CCC staff to facilitate the forums.

The CCC has provided all information required under the grant agreement. The grant agreement ended on 30 June 2016. It is not possible to provide a further breakdown of these expenditure items.