

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Cross Portfolio

DEEWR Question No. EW0045_14

Senator Back provided in writing.

Question

Travel Costs

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). 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. What travel is planned for the rest of this financial year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel. What is the policy for business class airfare tickets? Is there still a reduction in business flights as per the media release by the Minister for Finance and Deregulation and the Special Minister of State dated 25 September 2012? 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. 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. Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer

1. The Department did not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided for this question.
2. The total cost of travel for the Department for the 2012–13 financial year to 31 May 2013 was \$7,590,563. To provide the requested level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.
3. Travel planned for the remainder of the financial year was \$690,051. To provide the requested level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.
4. The department was abolished on 18 September 2013.

5. Business Class airfare tickets are approved for SES travel and for all staff travelling overseas. In the Department there was a reduction in business class flights in line with the media release dated 25 September 2012. Business Class fares represent 11.7 per cent of airfares this financial year, compared to 13 per cent of airfares during the 2011–12 financial year.
6. Yes, lounge memberships are provided to employees if they meet the qualification requirements. An employee qualifies for consideration for lounge membership where it is anticipated that eight or more business trips will be required to be undertaken in a 12 month period. The memberships are provided to ensure that frequent travellers have a professional environment from which they can work while waiting for flights, and also to ensure that they arrive as prepared as possible to represent the Department.

A breakdown of the lounge memberships at 31 January 2013 is provided below.

Staff Class'n	QANTAS	Virgin	Other	Total Cost
APS 4-6	66	1		21,486
EL1 & EL2	231	5		
SES and Equiv	89	2		

7. The Department did not approve travel of support staff based on servicing SES officers. The Department did not elect to offset emissions for employees' work-related travel.