

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

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

Cross Portfolio

Department of Education Question No. ED0128_14

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Travel costs

a) 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). b) 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. c) What travel is planned for the rest of from 7 September 2013? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel. d) What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel. e) What is the policy for business class airfare tickets? f) 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. g) 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. h) Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

Answer

As a result of changes made to the Administrative Arrangements Orders on 18 September 2013, the Department of Education was established. The following response includes data from DEEWR and Department of Education.

a. The Department does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided for this question.

b. For the financial year to 17 September 2013, the total travel expense for DEEWR was \$277,398. To provide the requested level of detail would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

For the period 17 September to 30 November 2013, the answer refers to the Department of Education¹. The total travel expense for this period was \$1,323,543.

c. and d. The department does not specifically budget or plan for travel. Travel is one cost of the department's business of policy and programme administration. Travel is undertaken for a range of purposes including to participate in meetings, face to face meetings with providers of services or grant recipients for compliance or administration purposes and face to face communication around government policies and programmes

e. Business class travel is available to SES staff for travel within Australia and to all staff required to travel internationally.

f. Lounge memberships are provided to staff where it is anticipated that eight or more business trips will be required to be undertaken in a 12 month period.

A breakdown of the lounge memberships at 30 November 2013 for the Department of Education is provided below.

Staff Class'n¹	QANTAS	Virgin
APS 1-3		
APS 4-6	47	
EL1 & EL2	108	3
SES and Equiv	42	1

The cost of memberships for DEEWR for the period 1 July 2013 to 17 September 2013 was \$4,831.84.

The cost of memberships for the Department of Education¹ for the period 18 September to 30 November 2013 was \$7,521.

g. The Department of Education does not approve travel of support staff.

h. The department does not elect to offset emissions for employees' work-related travel.

¹. Corporate and the State Office Network provide services to the Department of Education and the Department of Employment. The value associated with these functions has been attributed to both departments.