

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Cross portfolio

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000458

Senator Bilyk provided in writing.

Question

Visit to Torres Strait

Did any of the former or current Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries/Assistant Ministers in the portfolio, their personal staff or the Department participate in the former Prime Minister's trip to the Torres Strait?

If so-

What was the duration of the visit to Torres Strait?

Which locations did the Minister/his Department travel to?

Which communities did the Minister/his Department engage with?

What type of activities did they undertake?

What were the outcomes of the trip?

Was an official report or communique or similar published in relation to the trip?

Are you able to please provide an itinerary for the A Minister/his Department's trip?

Which hotel or hotels did the Minister/his Department stay in?

Could you please provide an itemised cost breakdown in relation to the Minister/his Department's involvement in this trip? This should be broken down into categories such as accommodation, ground transport, meals, incidentals etc.

How many members of the Minister's staff participated in the trip?

Could you please advise the number of staff, their title and staffing classification under the MOPS Enterprise Agreement?

In terms of departmental officials from the Department, could you please advise the names and roles of each departmental official in attendance?

Could you also please provide an itemised list of costs for departmental officials in terms of flights, accommodation, ground transport, meals and other incidentals? This should specify the officials which travelled in business class and those that travelled in economy, the hotels they stayed in and which businesses supplied ground transport.

Answer

The Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP, formerly the Assistant Minister for Employment, accompanied the former Prime Minister on the Australian Government contingent's visit to Torres Strait communities in Far North Queensland, 25–27 August 2015.

Below is the former Assistant Minister for Employment's itinerary:

Tuesday 25 August 2015

- Northern Peninsula Area welcome and dinner with Traditional owners, Elders and elected leaders

Wednesday 26 August 2015

- Masig (Yorke) Island
- Welcome Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) Deputy Chair, Cr Nai and Hilda Mosby, Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)
- Participate in revegetation project, a joint initiative with My Pathways, TSRA and Torres Strait Islands Regional Council (TSIRC)
- Visit Masig Muisau Campus (school) community welcome, tree planting with Elders, tour of school
- Meeting commences with a blessing led by Cr Nai
- Walking tour of community – stopping at IBIS food store, health centre and communication tower
- Official Farewell at Masig

Thursday 27 August 2015

- Meet with working group at Injinoo Community
- Work begins - Local Employment initiative – Injinoo Community Hall upgrade
- Morning Tea with workers
- Recommence work at Injinoo Community Hall
- Injinoo Community BBQ

The Secretary of the Department of Employment accompanied the former Assistant Minister for Employment on the trip.

The visit provided the former Assistant Minister for Employment and the Secretary an opportunity to engage directly with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Isolation and the remote location of these communities brings a special set of challenges in achieving better outcomes such as getting children to school, adults into work and making communities safe. The visit helped give the broader Australian community a better understanding of what we as a nation need to do to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote communities.

There was not an official report or communique or similar published in relation to the Australian Government contingent's visit to Torres Strait communities in Far North Queensland.

Travel details and costs of official travel by Ministers and Assistant Ministers and their staff are met by the Department of Finance (DoF). Any questions regarding those costs or arrangements should be referred to DoF.

The costs incurred by the Secretary during the trip:

- Flights - The total cost of the flights was \$2,811.32 (inclusive of booking fees). This included a combination of economy and business class.
- The Secretary recovered travel allowance as determined by the Remuneration Tribunal for one night in transit in Cairns. All other accommodation and meals were provided by Department of Defence.