

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission

Outcome/Program: 1.1

Topic: Training at Peppers Manor House and Lake Crackenback Resort

Senator: Smith

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Question:

Senator SMITH: Not wanting to interrupt, but I suspect the test of value for money is not yours, nor mine, but a community test of value for money, and \$320,000 being spent at Peppers Manor House does, in my mind, give rise to inquiry and, at the very least, explanation. I am keen to understand how many times it has been necessary to go to Peppers Manor House, how many individuals attended and why this venue was preferred over any other venue.

Mr Sedgwick: I am quite happy to answer those questions, Senator.

...

Senator SMITH: So \$90,000 was spent over the last three years at Lake Crackenback Resort. Again, I would be keen to understand how many people went, what was the nature of the training—

Mr Sedgwick: Certainly, Senator.

Answer:

Commission contract notices reported on AusTender relating to services provided by Peppers Manor House and Lake Crackenback Resort for programmes from 1 July 2010 to 30 April 2014 have a total value of \$511 649¹ and \$104 456¹, respectively. The actual expense incurred relating to Commission contracted services² provided by Peppers Manor House and Lake Crackenback Resort for the period shown above was \$424 681 and \$90 226, respectively. Contract values reported on AusTender reflect the Commission's maximum anticipated spend at the time each contract is let. Actual dollars spent depend on the activity undertaken, including variables such as the number of participants and the number of programmes.

In recent years at these two venues, the average residential programme component cost approximately \$370 per participant per day and was 3 to 3.5 days in duration. This amount includes accommodation and meals for each participant plus a per participant contribution towards other costs such as training facilities and equipment hire, accommodation and

¹ Based on contract notice end dates as they most accurately reflect the dates of residential programmes; contracts are often let well in advance due to deposit requirements and this is reflected in some contract start dates .

² Prior to 2012/2013, some Commission residential programs were delivered by providers that were also responsible for the hire of suitable venues.

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catering for facilitators, guest speakers and programme support staff and other incidentals. The participant contribution towards other costs will vary depending on the number of participants attending a programme.

Consistent with many private sector organisations, the Commission's leadership programmes currently include intensive residential workshops complemented by extended on-the-job training. Residential workshops make use of a range of development approaches in a condensed period with participants working throughout the day and evening.

Venues for residential workshops are selected on the basis of value for money taking into consideration a range of factors including suitability, availability and price. A number of venues including Peppers Manor House, Lake Crackenback Resort, Peppers Craigieburn and the Gibraltar Hotel Bowral have been used in recent years. All venues are of a similar standard, offering a combination of training facilities and on-site meals and accommodation conducive to an intensive learning programme.

Since 1 July 2010, the Commission has contracted Peppers Manor House as the venue for 19 programmes attended by 347 participants. In the same period, the Commission contracted Lake Crackenback Resort as the venue for 5 programmes attended by 105 participants.