

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 26-27 May 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of National Assessments

Outcome/Program: 1

Topic: Travel costs – department

Senator: Senator Ludwig

Question reference number: 304

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, 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).
2. Since Additional Estimates in February, 2014, 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.
3. What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

ONA Response:

1. No ONA Officials accompanied the Prime Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel.
2. ONA travel is related to the provision of assessments on international developments, including political, strategic and economic developments, which are reported to the Prime Minister, Senior Ministers and Senior Officials. Travel is also related to ONA being responsible for advancement of Australia's national interest through the effective coordination and elevation of Australia's foreign intelligence activities.
 - The total cost for domestic travel expenses from February to May 2014 was \$6,225, over 14 trips at an average cost of \$445 per trip. ONA officials fly economy class for domestic travel, including international connections; unless an international business class through fare is recommended at no additional cost, as part of the 'Best Fare of the Day' option. SES officers may fly business class if travelling to Darwin, Perth, or a destination of similar distance.
 - The total cost for international travel expenses from February to May 2014 was \$313,376, over 36 trips at an average cost of \$8,705 per trip. ONA officials fly business class overseas and economy class on domestic connections; unless an international business class through fare is recommended, as part of the 'Best Fare of the Day' option. There are occasions when international travel may be taken in economy class due to availability, routing, and/or budget restraints.
 - ONA does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow more detailed answers to be provided to these questions. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

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3. ONA travel is related to the provision of assessments on international developments, including political, strategic and economic developments, which are reported to the Prime Minister, Senior Ministers and Senior Officials. Travel is also related to ONA being responsible for advancement of Australia's national interest through the effective coordination and elevation of Australia's foreign intelligence activities.
 - There are 3 planned domestic trips for June 2014 and currently at least 2 planned domestic trips for the rest of the calendar year.
 - There are 10 planned international trips for June 2014 and currently at least 2 planned international trips for the rest of the calendar year.
 - ONA has not yet finalised budget projections for international travel plans in the 2014-15 financial year.
 - ONA does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow more detailed answers to be provided to this question. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.