

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, November 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of National Assessments

Outcome/Program: 1

Topic: Travel Costs

Senator: Senator Ludwig

Question reference number: 170

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 January 2014

Number of pages: 3

Question:

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).

ONA Response:

No Departmental officers accompanied the Prime Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel.

Question:

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.

ONA Response:

- The total Office of National Assessments (ONA) cost for domestic travel expenses from 1 July 2013 to 31 October 2013 is \$27,720. This includes 39 domestic trips.
- The total ONA cost for international travel expenses from 1 July 2013 to 31 October 2013 is \$307,450. This includes 27 international trips.
- ONA officials fly economy class for domestic travel. SES officers may fly business class if travelling to Darwin, Perth or a location with a similar distance.
- ONA officials fly business class for international travel. There are occasions when international travel is taken in economy class due to availability and routing.
- 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.
- 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.

Question:

What travel is planned for the rest of the financial year from 7 September 2013? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

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ONA Response:

- It is estimated that 80 international trips between 7 September 2013 and 30 June 2014 will be undertaken at an estimated cost of \$987,000.
- 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.
- 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.

Question:

What travel is planned for the rest of this calendar year? Also provide a reason and brief explanation for the travel.

ONA Response:

- It is estimated that 18 international trips will take place between 7 September 2013 and 31 December 2013 at an estimated cost of \$238,000.
- 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.
- 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.

Question:

What is the policy for business class airfare tickets?

ONA Response:

ONA Officials fly business class for international travel. There are occasions when international travel is taken in economy class due to availability and routing. Domestic travel is booked in economy class for all ONA Officials. SES Officials may fly business class on flights to Darwin, Perth or a location with a similar distance.

Question:

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.

ONA Response:

- Yes, ONA Officials that have Qantas Club memberships included in their employment conditions are offered a membership. A cost of \$822.50 has been expensed this financial year.
- ONA Officials are entitled to purchase Qantas Club memberships under the ONA Corporate Scheme. The full cost is reimbursed to the agency.

Question:

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.

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ONA Response:

No.

Question:

Does the department/agency elect to offset emissions for employees work related travel? If yes, what is the cost?

ONA Response:

No.