

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Prime Minister's visit to Arnhem Land

Senator: Senator the Hon Penny Wong

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Question:

Senator WONG: That is the unreasonable diversion of resources. That just does not pass the sniff test. I find it extraordinary that you are saying to me that you cannot tell me how much the accommodation of PM&C staff who travelled with the Prime Minister cost.

Ms Kelly: We could tell you the number of staff. It is not in this brief but I am sure we would be able to obtain information about the number of staff who travelled.

Senator WONG: Surely you must track that information? You must track how much staff are spending on travel.

...

Senator WONG: Perhaps, on notice, on Friday someone can explain on what basis you cannot track the accommodation cost for public servants for a three-day visit. I just think it is bizarre.

Ms Kelly: We will certainly make that inquiry and see how the information was recorded.

Senator WONG: And you can take on notice the number of staff for both of the visits?

Ms Kelly: My recollection is that we have already provided that in relation to the previous year's visit, but we will get that again.

Senator WONG: I am sorry. It might be in a different QoN.

Ms Kelly: We will provide it for this year's visit.

Answer:

1. In relation to departmental travel costs for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) staff involved in the former Prime Minister's trips to the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area, and North East Arnhem Land, the Department is able to generate a systems report which provides an indicative per person cost. To be certain we are providing a completely accurate figure we would need to manually review these records, which would require a considerable diversion of resources.

For the former Prime Minister's 2014 trip to North East Arnhem Land, the indicative cost for the 44 PM&C staff was \$1,765 per person. This approximate figure covers flights,

transport, accommodation and allowance costs for departmental staff for the week of the former Prime Minister's trip and the week immediately preceding during which staff were engaged in on site preparation.

The indicative per person cost for the 47 PM&C staff supporting the 2015 trip to the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area was \$3,900. This approximate figure covers flights, transport, accommodation and allowance costs for departmental staff for the week of the Prime Minister's trip and the two weeks immediately preceding during which staff were engaged in on site preparation. Costs relating to travel for the five staff members from other Departments involved in the visit would need to be sought from their agencies.

2. A total of 44 Commonwealth staff supported the running of Government from North East Arnhem Land in 2014.

Role	Number of staff
PM&C Executive	4
Event Managers	10
Operations Centre	7
IT Support	3
Drivers	11
Community Engagement	2
Logistics	2
Administrative support	3
Security	1
Departmental Liaison Officer	1

3. A total of 52 Commonwealth staff supported the running of Government from the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area in 2015. Of these:
 - 47 were from PM&C comprising 24 from National Office and 23 from the Regional Network
 - three were from the Department of Social Services
 - one was from the Department of Health
 - one was from the Torres Strait Regional Authority.

The breakdown of their roles follows:

Role	Number of staff
PM&C Executive	4
Event Managers	10
Operations Centre	8
IT support	7
Drivers	6
Community Engagement	5
Logistics	4
Administrative support	2
Security	2

Departmental Liaison Officer	1
Media Liaison	1
TSRA Liaison	1
Health Liaison	1
	TOTAL = 52