

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 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet
Topic: Reform of the Federation White Paper

Senator: Senator Catryna Bilyk

Question reference number: 267

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2015

Number of pages: 2

Questions:

- 1) Did any members of the Prime Minister's Expert Advisory Panel for the Reform of the Federation White Paper claim their \$1250 daily sitting fee for any work performed on 23 January 2015? If so, how many members claimed their daily sitting fee and what was the total cost to the Commonwealth?
- 2) Did any members of the Prime Minister's Expert Advisory Panel for the Reform of the Federation White Paper travel to or from Melbourne at Commonwealth [expense] to attend meetings or perform other business on 23 January 2015?
- 3) Did any members of the Prime Minister's Expert Advisory Panel for the Reform of the Federation White Paper stay overnight in Melbourne at Commonwealth expense in relation to business in Melbourne on 23 January 2015?
- 4) Did the Commonwealth pay for any meals or other incidentals for members of the Prime Minister's Expert Advisory Panel for the Reform of the Federation White Paper in relation to travel to Melbourne around 23 January 2015? If so, what was the total cost to the Commonwealth? Can a copy of any receipts in relation to this expenditure please be provided?
- 5) What was the total cost of flights to transport the six Commonwealth officials to and from Melbourne to attend official meetings including a meeting of the Expert Advisory Panel for the Reform of the Federation White Paper on 23 January 2015?
- 6) What was the total cost of ground transport for the six Commonwealth officials who travelled to Melbourne to attend these official meetings on 23 January 2015?
- 7) What was the total cost of accommodation for the five Commonwealth officials who stayed overnight in Melbourne in connection with these official meetings on 23 January 2015? What hotel(s) did they stay at?

- 8) Did the Commonwealth pay for any meals or other incidentals for these 5 Commonwealth officials in relation to travel to Melbourne around 23 January 2015? If so, what was the total cost to the Commonwealth? Can a copy of any receipts in relation to this expenditure please be provided?

Answer:

- 1) Yes. Five members were paid sitting fees of \$1,250, totalling \$6,250.
- 2) Yes. Four Panel members flew to Melbourne business class at a total cost to the Commonwealth of \$4,862.48, consistent with their entitlement under the Remuneration Tribunal's Determination 2013/16: Official Travel by Office Holders.

Panel members travelled to Melbourne to attend an Expert Advisory Panel meeting and a Federation White Paper Steering Committee meeting with Commonwealth, State and Territory officials.

- 3) Yes. Total accommodation costs were \$1,179. Panel members stayed at the Swanston Hotel Melbourne Grand Mercure and Drake House, Australian Catholic University.
- 4) Yes. The total cost was \$754.60 which includes travel allowance for any meals and incidentals that were not directly provided by the Commonwealth, and a pro-rata amount for lunch and beverages provided by the Commonwealth to Panel members.

Receipts are not required to be provided for Panel members to receive travel allowance. Locating and providing receipts would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

- 5) The total cost of flights for the six Commonwealth officials for all meetings on this day was \$3,525.33.
- 6) The total cost of ground transport for the six Commonwealth officials for all meetings on this day was \$905.39.
- 7) Five of these six Commonwealth officials stayed overnight in Melbourne. The total cost of accommodation for these five officials was \$951.50. They stayed at: Hotel Lindrum, Punthill Manhattan, Quest on Lonsdale, the Sofitel on Collins, and The Westin.
- 8) Yes. The total cost to the Commonwealth for meals and other incidentals for these five Commonwealth officials who stayed overnight to attend meetings in Melbourne on 23 January was \$746.18.

This includes a pro-rata amount for their portion of the food and beverages provided for lunch for all meeting attendees, as outlined in the tabled Parliamentary Question on Notice 1797. Locating and providing receipts would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.