

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2008-09
22-23 October 2008

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE & RESEARCH

TOPIC: Ministerial Travel

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 23 October 2008, E65-E66).

QUESTION No.: SI-37

Senator ABETZ—I will ask this question on notice. Mr Paterson, when I was asking about the minister's travel, you indicated that I had been provided with an extra answer in relation to question No. 729. Yes, I did in relation to all the staff, but in relation to the minister it was basically a repeat of the initial answer, which only relates to that which the Department of Finance and Deregulation tables and not the costs incurred. As I understand it, the department—

Mr Paterson—In response to the question earlier this afternoon, I indicated that our response was a response for all costs borne by the department.

Senator ABETZ—Do they find their way into the Department of Finance and Deregulation tables?

Mr Paterson—No.

Senator ABETZ—No?

Mr Paterson—We have answered the question, which includes all of the costs borne by the department in respect of that travel; and the other costs that will be borne in respect of that travel by the Department of Finance and Deregulation they will table.

Senator ABETZ—Did the minister only incur costs that will be disclosed in the Department of Finance and Deregulation tabling?

Mr Paterson—I am not aware of any other costs associated with that travel that have not been disclosed in the answer to the question provided to you or in that which will be tabled by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Senator ABETZ—Without delaying this too much, B1-19 disclosed no costs at all. As a result, we put a further parliamentary question on notice and, once again, I was not given any costs in relation to the minister; it was just a repeat.

Mr Paterson—I agree. As I understand the response to the question that we have provided to you, all of the costs associated with the minister's travel are costs that will be borne by the Department of Finance and Deregulation and tabled by them in their return. I am not aware of any other costs in relation to that travel that have not been disclosed in this answer to the question or will be disclosed by the Department of Finance and Deregulation in their normal response. If there is a gap in the question that I am missing of a category of expenses that you believe we have not responded to that will not be in the response from the Department of Finance and Deregulation, I am happy to look at it, but I am not aware of any category of expenses that has not been covered in our response.

Senator ABETZ—If you can check up on that, if whoever has that wonderful task in your department can have a look at what PM&C did to see whether that might alert them to any other expenses, that would be great, but I do not want to delay the committee any further...

ANSWER

On further examination, there were ground transport costs incurred by the Departmental Officer who accompanied the Minister to Japan and the United States in June 2008. Accounts for these costs had not been received at the time that the earlier responses were given.

The total costs for one Departmental Officer, including the ground transport costs, were:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| a) travel | \$28,358.66 |
| b) accommodation | \$3,657.24 |
| c) other expenses | \$3,019.23 |

Note: The total travel cost differs from the amount previously advised in Parliamentary Question No. 729 because it now includes ground transport in Nagoya, San Francisco and San Diego and a ground transfer from San Diego to Los Angeles.