

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Additional Estimates 8-11 February 2010

Question: PM68a-d

Topic: Community Cabinets

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 March 2010

Number of pages: 3

- a) What was the cost of Ministers travel and expenses for the Community Cabinet meetings held since Budget Estimates?**
- b) How many Ministerial Staff and Departmental officers travelled with the Minister for the Cabinet meeting?**
- c) What was the total cost of this travel?**
- d) What was the total cost to the Department and the Ministers office?**

Answer:

- a) The cost of ministerial travel falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Department of Finance and Deregulation. That Department has advised that the cost of travel for ministers within the PM&C portfolio for Community Cabinet meetings since May 2007 Budget Estimates, noting the caveat below*, was as follows:

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig (Cabinet Secretary) - \$8,697

Senator the Hon Mark Arbib - \$5,528

The Hon Anthony Byrne MP - \$6,815

**Finance advises that the cost of attending Community Cabinet meetings cannot be disaggregated from travel to other destinations immediately before and after the meeting. Finance also notes that the figures do not include Comcar travel, travel by taxis (exact locations are difficult to determine from information provided by Cabcharge) or travel on Special Purpose Aircraft, which is administered by the*

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Department of Defence. Defence has advised that the cost of flights for the aircraft is published and tabled every six months in the Schedule of Special Purpose Flights.

- b) The Community Cabinet Secretariat does not record how many ministerial staff travel with ministers for Community Cabinet meetings. The Secretariat does not record the number of departmental staff who travel with ministers except in respect of PM&C officers who attend Community Cabinet. In general there are sixteen staff that provide meeting organisation and logistics (eight members of the Secretariat and eight volunteers from the department), and one member of the Executive (either the Secretary or a deputy secretary) who supports the Prime Minister at one-on-one meetings.
- c) As noted in part a) of this answer, the cost of travel by ministers and their staff for Community Cabinet meetings falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Department of Finance and Deregulation. As noted also in a) travel on Special Purpose Aircraft is administered by the Department of Defence and the cost of flights for the aircraft is published and tabled every six months in the Schedule of Special Purpose Flights. Finance has advised that the total cost of travel for ministers and their staff within the PM&C portfolio to attend Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates, noting the caveat below*, is as follows:

Prime Minister's office - \$73,493.86

Cabinet Secretary (Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig) - \$26,034.72

Senator the Hon Mark Arbib - \$11,997.91

The Hon Anthony Byrne MP - \$13,714.82

*Finance advises that this information relies on an assumption that all travel to and from locations immediately before and after Community Cabinet meetings was for the purpose of attending those meetings and/or closed Cabinet

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meetings held in Community Cabinet locations. We understand many ministers take the opportunity to undertake other activities in the region.

The cost of travel for departmental officers is the responsibility of the relevant department. The cost of travel for departmental officers from PM&C to Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates is as follows (as at 1 March 2010*):

Beenleigh (June 2009)	\$33,065
Elizabeth (July 2009)	\$32,086
Port Macquarie (August 2009)	\$29,103
Geraldton (October 2009)	\$73,288
Hobart (October 2009)	\$31,872
Bathurst (November 2009)	\$20,830
Townsville (December 2009)	\$24,853
Adelaide (January 2010)	\$20,550
Ballarat (February 2010)	\$21,726

* These are the available costs, and estimates of costs where final figures are not yet available

- d) There have been nine Community Cabinet meetings held since the May 2009 Budget Estimates and total costs for the Department as at 1 March 2010 amount to \$713,230 (excluding salaries). As noted in parts a) and c), costs incurred by ministers and their staff to attend Community Cabinet meetings are the responsibility of the Department of Finance and Deregulation. Details of these costs have been provided by Finance and are outlined in a) and c) above. Costs incurred by departments to attend meetings are the responsibility of the relevant department.