

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Australian Public Service Commission
Outcome/Program: Cross Portfolio
Topic: Travel costs

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: 102

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 March 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by your portfolio Minister and Parliamentary Secretaries. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
2. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for any Minister and Parliamentary staff that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff.
3. For the financial year to date, please provide the same information (itemised separately) for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and Parliamentary Secretary on their travel and include a similar breakdown of the costs incurred by or on behalf of those staff.
4. For the financial year to date, please detail all travel (itemised separately) undertaken by employees of each department and agency within each portfolio. Include details of what the travel was for, what cost was spent on travel (including travel type – i.e. business airfare), accommodation, security, food, beverages (alcohol listed separately), gifts, entertainment, and all other expenses.
5. Are employees taking the most direct route when travelling? If not, please explain why.
6. 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 cost per employee.
7. When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as their 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.

Answer:

1. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) does not have information about travel costs by Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and MOP(S) Act staff as these arrangements are administered by the Department of Finance and Deregulation.
2. Not applicable.
3. For this financial year no APSC officers accompanied a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary on their travels.
4. Total travel costs for the APSC financial year to date is \$1,285,575 inclusive of GST. A high level breakdown of the travel spend is shown below:

Airfare	774,640
Travel allowance	364,998
International assistance recipient travel costs	0
Indigenous recruitment candidate travel costs	51,990
Taxi and parking	93,947
Total travel cost	1,285,575

The APSC does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow the detailed breakdown of costs and itemised information requested to be provided to these questions. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of APSC resources.

5. Flights that provide best value to facilitate business requirements which may be achieved other than using direct flights are approved. Noting that for some destinations for example the Pacific Island countries, there are often no direct flights available.
6. The APSC's travel policy specifies that lounge membership is available via individual agreements. Other officials may put a business case to access the lounge membership where there is a demonstrated business need. As at February 2012, there are 33 employees who have Qantas club memberships which range from Bronze to Gold classes. Each membership cost \$260 to renew on an annual basis despite membership classes. Free upgrades of membership class were offered due to employee travel frequency. Typically, the employee classifications range from EL1 to SES.
7. The APSC SES officers travel without personal support staff.