

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing – May 2010

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 3, Program 3.1

Topic: Use of severance travel entitlement by former Senators and Members

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Senator Cameron asked:

But that leaves the great unanswered question: can you then use 20 flights during an election campaign, using public funding, to run your campaign?

...

I still think it is a grey area. I am not sure you have answered these questions effectively or clearly, so I would ask you to take on notice whether a candidate for political office can use their severance entitlement to campaign for that political office. I would like to get your considered position.

Answer:

Retiring Senators and Members (Members) who do not serve in Parliament for the necessary qualifying period for a Life Gold Pass, under the *Members of Parliament (Life Gold Pass) Act 2002*, are entitled to severance travel under clause 8.1 of *Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2006/18 – Members of Parliament – Entitlements* (the Determination).

The only restriction on the purpose of travel under the severance travel entitlement is that it must be for *non-commercial purposes*. After travelling under the severance entitlement, a former Member is required to certify in writing that the travel was undertaken for non-commercial purposes.

Travel undertaken by a former Member for the purposes of campaigning for re-election is considered to be travel for a 'non-commercial purpose' and is therefore permissible under the severance travel entitlement.