

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Department of Finance and Deregulation

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** Travel costs

**Senator:** Ryan

**Question reference number:** F115

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 6 July 2012

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

- a) For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
- b) For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
- c) Are the Government's Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11) guidelines being followed? How is this monitored? If the guidelines are not being followed, please explain why.
- d) 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 total costs of the lounge memberships.
- e) When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an 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:**

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012:

- a) During the financial year to date, three departmental officers accompanied the Special Minister of State (SMOS). One officer travelled with the SMOS to inspect the electorate

office in the electorate of Forrest in Western Australia. The officer travelled in a COMCAR with the SMOS. There were no costs incurred by or on behalf of the officer. Two officers travelled with the SMOS on 14 July 2011 to undertake an inspection, and inform the SMOS, of the issues at each of the Commonwealth-owned properties on the Cox Peninsula in the Northern Territory. The total cost for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012 was \$2,449.74. This includes airfares, accommodation, meals and other travel expenses.

b) My Department manages the whole-of-government travel arrangements. The arrangements commenced on 1 July 2010 and delivered \$240 million savings to the Budget over the period 2010-2016. Additionally, agencies retained about one-third of the total savings available.

For the period 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012, total expenditure on air travel, at the whole of government level, was approximately \$271 million.

Reporting information at the level of detail requested would create significant additional work for my Department. There are currently over 130 agencies, including 23 Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 bodies, participating in the arrangements. With nearly \$0.5 billion annual air travel expenditure, the collection of this data would incur a significant resource cost. Compiling the information to the level of detail requested would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

As for my own Department, it spent \$1.823 million on official travel from 1 July 2011 to 31 January 2012. This was comprised of fares (\$0.923 million), Travel Allowances (\$0.040 million) and accommodation and meal costs (\$0.860 million).

c) The most direct route does not underpin official travel policy. Official travel arrangements are guided by the Lowest Practical Fare travel policy for Domestic Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/10) and Best Fare of the Day for International Air Travel (Finance Circular No. 2009/11), which provide guidance around the necessity of taking the most appropriate route. Under the Australian Government's devolved financial framework, responsibility for monitoring compliance with government policy is the responsibility of each Agency's Chief Executive.

d) My Department funds airline lounge memberships for a number of employees, where there is a business requirement. As at 9 March 2012, there were 145 active airline lounge memberships for departmental staff. The table below sets out the number of memberships for both Qantas Club and Virgin Lounge memberships by classification.

CLASSIFICATION	VIRGIN LOUNGE	QANTAS CLUB
APS 1—EL2	8	79
SES	0	58

The cost per employee cannot readily be calculated due to a range of pricing options applying to airline lounge memberships including, joining fees, variable membership fees depending on duration of membership and the different levels of membership offered by the airlines.

e) No.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Australian Electoral Commission

**Outcome/Program:** General

**Topic:** Travel costs

**Senator:** Ryan

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- a) For the financial year to date, please detail all travel for Departmental officers that accompanied the Minister and/or Parliamentary Secretary on their travel. Please include a total cost plus a breakdown that include airfares (and type of airfare), accommodation, meals and other travel expenses (such as incidentals).
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- d) 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 total costs of the lounge memberships.
- e) When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an 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:**

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012:

- a) N/A.

- b) Total costs for travel are shown in the table below. Total costs are shown as the AEC does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided in the detail requested. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources.

<b>Type of travel expense</b>	<b>\$</b>
Domestic airfares	775,760
Domestic accommodation	569,871
Domestic travel allowances	546,498
International airfares	340,637
International accommodation	191,553
International travel allowances	148,343
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,572,662</b>

- c) The guidelines are followed. AEC staff are required to obtain approval for all travel, including if required, approval for flights other than the cheapest one identified as allowed under the Government's policy. The AEC's travel provider provides monthly reports on use of lowest practical fare.
- d) All AEC SES officers and PEOs are entitled to airline lounge memberships at the AEC's cost. For non-SES staff, memberships are only granted on a case-by-case basis where a demonstrated benefit to the agency exists, or to meet WH&S responsibilities. Costs for membership are as per the corporate scheme rates provided by Qantas, and the current private membership rates advertised by Virgin Australia. The table below lists all lounge memberships paid for by the AEC.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Membership Period</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Executive Level 1	Qantas	1 year	\$260
Executive Level 1	Qantas and Virgin	Qantas 1 year, Virgin year	\$843
Executive Level 1	Qantas and Virgin	Qantas 1 year, Virgin 1 year	\$843
A/g Executive Level 2	Qantas	1 year	\$260
Executive Level 2	Qantas and Virgin	Qantas 1 year, Virgin 1 year	\$828
SES Band 1	Qantas	4 years	\$860
SES Band 1	Qantas	1 year	\$260
SES Band 1	Qantas	2 years	\$416.87
SES Band 1	Qantas	2 years	\$435

- e) No.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** ComSuper  
**Outcome/Program:**  
**Topic:** Travel costs

**Senator:** Ryan

**Question reference number:** F115

**Type of question:** Written

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- d) 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 total costs of the lounge memberships.
- e) When SES employees travel, do any support or administrative staff (such as an 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:**

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012:

- a) N/A.
- b) ComSuper does not record travel data in a way that readily allows detailed travel answers to be provided. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable

diversion of departmental resources. As at 30 April 2012, ComSuper has spent \$163,271.15 on travel.

- c) Yes. ComSuper monitors compliance through periodic reports provided by its Travel Management Company (TMC).
- d) Yes. Qantas Club lounge memberships are provided to 11 staff (classification levels vary from APS 4 to SES) that are involved in consistent and frequent interstate travel. Lounges provide a more secure location for staff travelling with corporate assets such as laptops and mobiles etc. The total costs of lounge memberships was \$4,481.83.
- e) No.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation  
**Outcome/Program:**  
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**Answer:**

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012:

- a) N/A.
- b) The total travel costs for the financial year to date (as at 30 April 2012) are AUD \$121,564. It is not possible to individually report on all items in the question as costs

for accommodation, food and incidental expenses are met by individual travellers from domestic or international travelling allowances paid at a daily rate.

- c) CSC's employees are required to follow CSC's travel policy.
- d) Yes – Qantas Club membership is offered to employees who make more than 10 trips per year, and all Directors. Currently, there are 4 employees (1 analyst and 3 senior executives) and 1 director with memberships. In respect of public monies, the total cost of memberships is \$1,690 this financial year to date.
- e) No.



**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
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**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Future Fund Management Agency

**Outcome/Program:**

**Topic:** Travel costs

**Senator:** Ryan

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**Answer:**

For the period 1 July 2011 to 30 April 2012:

- a) N/A.
- b) The Agency does not record travel data in a way that would readily allow answers to be provided to these questions. To attempt to provide this level of detail would involve an unreasonable diversion of agency resources, but aggregate data is provided below. All travel is purchased on the basis of best value for money and is undertaken in connection

with the management of the assets of the Future Fund and Nation-building Funds in accordance with the Fund's legislation. All staff travel economy class for flights within Australia and to New Zealand. Staff flying to destinations outside Australia and New Zealand travel business class.

<b>2011-12 Financial Year to Date (30 April 2012)</b>	<b>Total Cost:</b>
Accommodation and meals	\$253,235
Travel – flights	\$950,003
Taxis and other transport	\$78,284

- c) Yes. Our travel provider provides quarterly reports showing where best fare has or has not be selected.
- d) No.
- e) No.