



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Senator the Hon. Glenn Sterle
Chairman
Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Sterle

Further to my letter of 21 June 2011, I would like to make the following correction to the transcript of the Budget Estimates hearing conducted by the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 23 and 24 May 2011.

The correction relates to an answer provided by Dr O'Connell to a question from Senator Colbeck, which can be found on page 5 and 6 of the proof Hansard of 23 May 2011.

Senator COLBECK: You also referred to specific reductions in travel. How has your travel budget varied over the last 12 months?

Dr O'Connell: Again, I would have to get those numbers for you during the day, if that is okay.

Senator COLBECK: You do not have a consolidated travel figure for the portfolio?

Mr Schaeffer: We do, we just do not have that level of detail with us.

Dr O'Connell: We can get that.

Senator COLBECK: They are questions that we have asked before.

Dr O'Connell: Many questions get asked a lot.

Senator COLBECK: We have been through this efficiency dividend stuff every year.

Dr O'Connell: We can provide it to you today, I am sure.

Senator COLBECK: We just keep on getting palmed off to some time later in the day. Can you give me a sense of what restructuring has occurred within the department to meet the efficiency dividend?

Dr O'Connell: I can give you some indication of travel. I have just been given some figures which might help. We can go back to the travel numbers, if that would help?

Senator COLBECK: Certainly.

Dr O'Connell: This is air travel data and we can provide the numbers to you directly, but just to give you a sense of their scale, in 2008-09 the total cost of travel was \$20,979,795. In 2009-10 it was \$22,816,000-odd, and this current year to April it is \$18,846,000. When you go to international travel in 2008-09, it was \$7 million-odd, and 1 July 2010 to April this year is \$5 million-odd. We can see a holding or reduction in the level of travel there. Domestic travel last year, for example, was \$17,475,000 and this year to April is \$13,600,000.

Senator COLBECK: The 20, the 22 and the 18 that you gave me—are they gross figures?

Dr O'Connell: They are given to me here as total cost of air travel.

Senator COLBECK: Total cost?

Dr O'Connell: Yes.

Senator COLBECK: Where does the \$7 million fit into the 20?

Dr O'Connell: Sorry, the 20 is the total cost. The \$7 million is international, the \$13 million was domestic; so we have got it broken into total domestic and international. We can provide you with these figures.

Senator COLBECK: In 2008-09, the total travel was almost \$21 million.

Dr O'Connell: \$21 million, roughly, rounded.

Senator COLBECK: The international was \$7 million.

Dr O'Connell: Yes.

Senator COLBECK: And the domestic was 13 to 14.

Dr O'Connell: Yes. In 2009-10 it was rounded to 23, 17½ and five and a bit; so, total—23, rounded; domestic—17 ½ and international, five and a bit. To the end of April this year, which is as close as we have, it is 18.8 total; that is roughly 13½ domestic and five-ish international. As I said, we can get the precise figures. That of course will include a large quantity of cost-recovered travel related to our border quarantine business and others.

The figures provided to Senator Colbeck for departmental travel in 2009–10 were erroneous due to an administrative error. The correct figures for departmental travel are:

	2008-09 (\$m)	2009-10 (\$m)	1 July 2010 to 31 May 2011 (\$m)
Total Cost	21.0	17.7	19.4
Domestic Travel	14.0	12.4	13.8
International Travel	7.0	5.3	5.6

Source: DAFF financial management information system – QSP

Note: The figures are net of GST and include travel for departmental and administered programs and exclude contract management and administration fees charged by the department's travel services provider.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide clarification on the above point.

Yours sincerely



for Elizabeth Bie

General Manager
Ministerial and Parliamentary Branch

30 June 2011