

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 01

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Requests for Temporary Accommodation Arrangements

Hansard Page: 6 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Given the skills shortages being felt across the workforce, has any prospective employee made a request, either formally or informally, to work under similar arrangements—that is, to reside temporarily in a city other than their home base? You may need to take that on notice.

Mr Chandler—Can I take that on notice?

Senator O'BRIEN—Yes. And if so, what was the outcome of their request?

Answer:

Some staff based overseas are paid allowances associated with their overseas deployment. Staff located at remote localities are paid Remote Localities Allowance in accordance with Section I of the DOTARS Collective Agreement 2006-09. No other staff are currently paid an allowance to reside in alternate locations to their home-base.

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Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 02

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Travel Service Provider Contract

Hansard Page: 8 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Can you tell us who has submitted a quotation?

Mr Chandler—Given that the process is still not finalised, I would rather take that on notice and come back on that if I can. It is effectively an open quote tender process and we have not yet formally gone back to any of the people who have quoted.

Senator O'BRIEN—Can you advise the Committee whose the successful quote is when that is done?

Mr Chandler—What we will provide on notice is the advice on the firms approached, the four who have quoted and the successful tenderer.

Answer:

In responding to questions during the hearing, it was indicated that up to seven firms may have been approached. Only four firms were actually approached, as follows:

TravelFix Pty Ltd;
Butler Caroye and Associates;
TMS Travel Management Solutions; and
Grosvenor Management Consulting Pty Limited

DOTARS received proposals from all four firms.

The successful tenderer is Grosvenor Management Consulting Pty Limited.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 03

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Vehicle Acquisition Policy

Hansard Page: 10 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—According to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's 2006 Review, \$500,000 was provided to ANCAP, the *Australian New Car Assessment Program*. In response to questions during the May Estimates, I was advised that the Department does not use the ANCAP safety ratings as a reference point when selecting vehicles for the departmental fleet. Has that changed?

Mr Mrdak—From recollection, the evidence at the time was that we rely on the guidelines published by the Department of Finance and Administration for our fleet acquisition. That remains the Department's position.

Senator O'BRIEN—The answer is that you still do not have regard to it, you simply refer to the guidelines?

Mr Mrdak—We refer to the Commonwealth guidelines.

Senator O'BRIEN—Which I take it has no reference to that.

Mr Mrdak—I would need to check. I am sorry I am not very familiar with the guidelines.

Answer:

The vehicle selection guidance issued by the Department of Finance and Administration does not refer to ANCAP.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 04

Division/Agency: Corporate Services Division

Topic: Annual Reports

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Ludwig asked:

With regard to each Agencies (and the Department itself) that fall inside the Department's Portfolio, could the Department indicate—

What date the Agency's *2005-06 Annual Report* was tabled before Parliament?

Answer:

The *Department of Transport and Regional Services Annual Report 2005-06* was tabled in Parliament on 17 October 2006. The Portfolio Agencies are providing separate responses to this question.

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Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 05

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Annual Reports

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Ludwig asked:

If the Annual Report was **not** tabled by **31 October 2006**, could the Department indicate:

- a. When the Report was tabled, or if it remains un-tabled what date the Report is expected to be tabled by?
- b. Whether the Agency's own legislation provides an alternative timeframe for its Annual Report. If so, could the Department provide:
 - i. A description and reference to the relevant provision and legislation.
 - ii. An explanation of why the Agency cannot meet the general timeframe set out in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's Requirements for Annual Reports, and so requires an alternative timeframe?
- c. Whether the Agency was granted an extension under section sub-sections 34C(4) - (7) of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*? If so, could the Department provide:
 - i. The date for finalizing the report as set out in the extension.
 - ii. The reason given for granting the extension.
 - iii. The date that the Minister tabled in Parliament a statement explaining why an extension was granted.
 - iv. A copy of the Minister's statement.
- d. Where the Agency's legislation doesn't provide for an alternative timeframe (as per **question b**) nor was the Agency granted an extension (as per **question c**) could the Department provide:
 - i. Explanation for why the Annual Report was tabled outside the timeframe set by DPM&C despite there being no provision alternative timeframe set out in the Agency's legislation nor there being any formal extension granted?
 - ii. Details of any other arrangement in place for the tabling of the Agency's Annual Report.

Answer:

Please refer to the Department's response to **CORP 04**.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 06

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Possible Parliamentary Questions

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Ludwig asked:

With regard to the preparation of Possible Parliament Questions briefs or other such documents intended to brief Minister's on an issue specifically for Question Time, could the Department/Agency provide:

- a. The number of such briefs prepared in each of the last three financial years (2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06).
- b. The number of staff who are responsible for coordinating such briefs and the salary level they are engaged at.
- c. The name of internal unit/team that those staff belong to and a description of its other responsibilities.
- d. The total budget associated with the unit/team referred to in response to part 3.

Answer:

- (a) Historical data on the number of Question Time Briefs (QTBs) prepared is not maintained. However, on average, around 100 QTBs are prepared by the Department during a Parliamentary sitting week.
- (b, c & d) A Department Liaison Officer (DLO), within the Minister's office, coordinates the preparation of QTBs in addition to other DLO duties. The DLO coordinates the preparation of QTBs via a central coordinator within each Business Division of the Department. The level of these coordinators varies from Division to Division and the task of coordinating QTBs is in addition to their usual administrative duties.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 07, CORP 08, CORP 09

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Legal Services Expenditure

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Ludwig asked:

(CORP 07) What sum did the Department/Agencies spend during 2005-2006 on external (a) barristers and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others)?

(CORP 08) What sum did the Department/Agencies spend on internal legal services?

(CORP 09) What is the Department's/Agencies' projected expenditure on legal services for 2006-2007?

Answers:

(CORP 07 & CORP 08) These details are set out at Page 180 of the *Department's Annual Report 2005-2006*.

(CORP 09) The Department's projected expenditure on legal services for 2006-2007 is \$4,103,000.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: CORP 10

Division/Agency: Corporate Services

Topic: Mr Taylor's Allowances

Hansard Page: 6 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Can the Committee receive the final totals for the last financial year of Mr Taylor's (a) reunion travel allowance, as well as of the so-called (b) temporary accommodation allowance?

Mr Chandler—I do not have those figures with me but we can provide those. I think we have provided figures up to the end of May in response previously.

Answer:

- (a) In accordance with Section 61 of the *Public Service Act 1999*, the Secretary is entitled to reunion travel. Reunion travel is calculated from the period of commencement of employment. Mr Taylor commenced employment with the Australian Public Service in January 2000 and hence, the reunion travel figures are calculated from January to December.

By way of update to the answer to CORP 02, in the May 2006 Budget Estimates round, the detailed breakdown of reunion travel for the years 2005 and 2006 (to date) are as follows:

	17 Jan 205 to 16 Jan 2006	17 Jan 2006 to 22 May 2006
Airfares	5,028.50	1,014.00
Taxi Fares	668.40	188.70
TOTAL	5,696.90	1,202.70

\$340 a week from 1 July 2005 to 3 August 2006 and an amount per week equal to \$25,000 a year from 4 August 2006, in accordance with an amendment to clause 7.12 of the Remuneration Tribunal Determination made on 4 August 2006.