

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Vowles to the Chief Minister:

Auditor-General's Report 2015 – Ministerial Travel

With respect to the Auditor-General's key finding that '*Two instances were noted where there was no evidence of a stay at commercial accommodation being provided to substantiate a claim for travelling allowance as per Part A of Schedule 2 (of the current RTD)*':

1. Which Ministers did not provide the required documentation?
2. In each of the two cases:
 - a. How many days were claimed for?
 - b. What was the total amount claimed?
 - c. Which commercial accommodation was used?
3. Has any documentation subsequently been provided to substantiate the claims for travelling allowance?
4. If so, what documentation was provided and when?
5. If not, why not?
6. Have any refunds been paid by Ministers in relation to these claims for travelling allowance or any other recovery arrangements put in place?

ANSWER

1. In this instance the Department of the Chief Minister did not seek to obtain receipts, or statements from Minister Conlan to substantiate the travelling allowance claims. The Department has validated all aspects of the claim and the entitlement paid to the Minister was appropriate and in accordance with the entitlements approved in Remuneration Tribunal Determination 1 of 2013. The Department has noted the comment in the Auditor-General's return and now seeks receipts or Minister's certification when claims are made under Part A of Schedule 2.
2. Claims were made for 4 and 7 days respectively to the values of \$1,800 and \$3,150. Accommodation for the Minister was arranged at the C2 apartments on these occasions.

3. When the issue was raised in the Auditor-General's report in March 2015 the claims were 4 months and 6 months old. The Department has adjusted its practice for current and future claims but did not seek to further substantiate past claims. The Department was aware that commercial accommodation was used by the Minister on these occasions and claims were valid.
4. Not applicable.
5. As the Auditor-General had already noted the omission in her report seeking substantiation of the claims in arrears does not change the Auditor's findings. The Department has focused on future events to remedy this issue.
6. The claims made by the Minister were in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal Determination No. 1 of 2013 and no refund is required.