

Michael Tatham

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NT
TABLED DOCUMENTS

From: Walsh, Christopher <christopher.walsh@news.com.au>
Sent: Thursday, 15 June 2017 4:15 PM
To: Kezia Purick; Michael Tatham
Subject: Questions for Speaker and Clerk on Travel Costs

Committee: *Estimates*
Paper No: *4.1* Date: *20/6/17*
Tabled By: *Speaker*
Signed: *[Signature]*

Hi Kezia and Michael,

A number of issues have been raised with me in relation to trips taken by both of you to CPA conferences and other fraternal get-togethers - as well as allegations of possible misuse of CPA subventions. We have a few questions below that will inform a story.

QUESTIONS ON CLERK TRAVEL:

How much of the Clerk's \$37,532 in travel between Sept 2016 and Mar 2017 was paid for by taxpayers and how much of that was paid by CPA funds?

It appears, from the answers to written questions released last week, that all of that travel is funded by the Legislative Assembly and therefore taxpayer funds. Is that the case? If not, why was it not specified in the written response (P.17)?

Are you aware that this travel cost is \$12,000 more than both the Treasurer and the Attorney-General claimed combined on travel over the same seven months? Why would the Clerk need to travel more and at larger costs than Ministers of the Crown?

What value is there for taxpayers to send the esteemed Clerk on extravagant trips to Tonga, Zambia and as "support" for the Speaker in London?

Does the Clerk need to file a report on his overseas and interstate travel to Parliament or to anyone else for that matter? If not, why not?

Who approves his fabulous trips and why? What criteria does he have to meet before approval is granted?

Please provide details and costs of all other travel undertaken by the Clerk from Jan 2015 to March 2017 and how all the trips were paid for.

QUESTIONS ON SPEAKER TRAVEL:

How much travel has the Speaker taken between Jan 2015 and Mar 2017 paid for by CPA funds?

How much Speaker travel has been paid for by the DLA?

What is the total amount for all of the Speaker's travel from Jan 2015 to Mar 2017?

Please explain what benefit Territory taxpayers get out of all of this travel?

QUESTIONS ON CPA FUNDS:

How much money has the NT Parliament or local branch of the CPA received in subvention payments from the CPA between Jan 1, 2015 and Mar 31, 2017?

Who precisely were those funds sent to?

Where were the funds deposited and who authorised them to be deposited into that account?

Those funds are intended to offset the costs of hosting CPA-related functions. Were they used for that purpose or deposited for travel for MLAs and both of you?

Is it appropriate to use those funds for travel and airfare to attend other events?

How much of the CPA funds from the NT CPA account were used to pay for conferences held here and how much has been used to pay for MLA and Speaker and Clerk travel?

Did the NT Government pay for the Commonwealth Youth Parliament conference held here in Oct 2015?

What was the total cost of that event and how much did the CPA provide for it? How much did the NTG pay?

Was the money received from the CPA used to pay for that event or simply deposited in a separate bank account that the NTG has no oversight of?

Did the payments from visiting member branches of the CPA cover the costs of the 2016 Pacific Regional CPA Conference held here, without the extra money sent from CPA HQ?

What was the total cost of that event and how much did the CPA provide for it? How much was received from the member CPA branches for the event in total and what was the average amount paid by the individual branches?

Was the money received from the CPA used to pay for that event or simply deposited in a separate bank account that the NTG has no oversight of?

Is this a slush fund?

What is the balance of that account currently?

What are those funds used for?

Who has access to that account? (Please list all names).

Has that account ever been audited by a third party outside of the NT CPA committee? If so, by whom?

Why did CFO Diem Tang not look into what funds were being deposited into the account and how they were being used when questions were raised with her about the potential for impropriety?

Where in any annual report has that account been mentioned or financial updates provided?

LAST QUESTION: Why, in the released responses to Estimates questions from the Opposition, did the Clerk claim no expenditure on "hospitality/functions and events spending" from Sept to March? What about the Speaker's Christmas party and other staff/community functions? How were those paid for? Was CPA money used for that or any other NT-only specific events?

I understand this is a lot of questions. We'll be running the story soon, so will need responses by tomorrow (Friday) at 3pm for deadline. I say 3pm because I will undoubtedly have a couple of follow up questions based on your responses. And since it's Estimates time, I'm sure most of the answers to the above questions will be readily available.

Feel free to divvy up the questions as you see fit, but both of you will be mentioned in the story, so lines from both would seem appropriate to get your side of the story in.

Thanks in advance,

Chris

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Received 15/06/2017

Questions for the CPA Headquarters Secretariat regarding CPA subventions to CPA Northern Territory Branch:

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"According to a whistle-blower here, the Northern Territory Parliament (or local Northern Territory CPA branch made up of Speaker Kezia Purick and Clerk Michael Tatham) has received at least two different payments from the CPA in 2015/16 for events they hosted including the 5th Commonwealth Youth Parliament Conference in Oct 2015 and the Pacific Regional CPA Conference in 2016."

- **Can you confirm that the CPA awarded a subvention of 20,000 pounds for the Youth Parliament event held at the NT Parliament and another 5,000 pounds for the Secretary General Dinner at that same event?**
- **For what purpose was that money intended?**
- **Can you confirm that CPA awarded a subvention of 14,000 pounds to the NT Legislature for the Pacific Regional CPA Conference in 2016?**
- **For what purpose was that money intended?**
- **Did the CPA provide any subvention for the recent Mid-Year meetings of the Executive Committee held in Darwin, NT in April 2017?**
- **If so, how much and for what purpose was that money intended?**
- **According to the whistle-blower, that money was not in fact used by the Clerk or Speaker for the events but rather deposited into a separate bank account and used to fund travel for the Speaker and Clerk to attend other CPA events around the world, as well as ANZACATT and Presiding Officers and Clerks events.**
- **Does this concern the CPA?**
- **Does the CPA give clear instructions on how that money is to be used?**
- **Was any subvention given to the NT Parliament or Legislative Assembly for travel and airfare for the Clerk or Speaker to attend any CPA events? If so, how much between January 1, 2015 and March 31, 2017?**
- **How much in subvention payments have been made in total to the Northern Territory CPA branch or NT Parliament between Jan 1, 2015 and March 31, 2017?**

- **Figures released by the NT Legislative Assembly last week show Clerk Michael Tatham spent \$37,532.15 on a number of trips from September 2016 to March 2017, including to the 62nd CPA conference with Madam Speaker in December 2016. Did the CPA award Mr Tatham or Kezia Purick any money to attend this event? Or were they told to pay for their travel costs to attend the event?**
- **Are there any provisions on the subventions when they are paid to the Northern Territory branch or Parliament? If so, what are those provisions?**
- **I understand that the CPA accrues funds from a nominal fee that all elected MLAs pay. Is that the only way the CPA raises money or are there other sources of income?**
- **Will the CPA be conducting any type of investigation or audit into how the funds paid to the Northern Territory are being spent?**

“That should be it. As mentioned, nobody is suggesting the CPA did anything wrong, it just appears that subventions granted to the Northern Territory may not be used in the way in which they are intended. We would appreciate any assistance you can provide on this matter. Feel free to contact me by email or at the phone numbers below if you require any further information. As mentioned, we will be running the story in the next day or two so will need responses as soon as you can provide them.”

-Ends-

Michael Tatham

Subject: Questions for Speaker and Clerk on Travel Costs

From: Walsh, Christopher [<mailto:christopher.walsh@news.com.au>]

Sent: Friday, 16 June 2017 8:16 PM

To: Kezia Purick; Michael Tatham; Cameron Angus; Craig Rowston

Subject: Re: Questions for Speaker and Clerk on Travel Costs

Hi Michael and Kezia,

I've spoken with the Editor and we've decided to extend the deadline for you to answer our questions of Thursday afternoon in relation to the NT CPA branch bank account and assorted travel questions.

In an extra effort to afford you the opportunity to answer the questions and provide your side of the story, we will extend the deadline to tomorrow (Saturday) at 2 pm. We will also change the request for the amount of funds paid to the NT CPA account by the CPA beginning from Jan 2015 to Jan 2016. This might be easier for you to manage.

Mr Tatham, we understand you have received the original questions (also seen below) and that you raised the matter with staff today. Sources have indicated you demanded to know who told me about the account and the flights paid for by the funds. It strikes me as odd that you would do that instead of answering the questions and using that time to find the information requested. That will be noted in the story.

In any case, we feel this new deadline is fair and will permit both of you to give us your side of the story before publication. Please understand this will be the final extension and that the story will run with or without comment from either of you.

Thanks in advance,

Chris