

Finalisation Report

TO: Ms Petra Gartmann PG 29/5  
Branch Manager, Executive Support and Assurance

SUBJECT: Senator Fraser Anning  
Senator for Queensland  
Assurance Review – Travel Expenses – November 2017 to January 2019

BACKGROUND:

On 5 January 2019, Senator Fraser Anning attended a rally publicised as “Reclaim the Beach: Rally at St Kilda Beach” (*Attachment A*). Numerous media outlets were present and reported a number of headlines including but not limited to:

St Kilda Beach far-right rally draws hundreds of Melbourne police, rival protesters  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-05/far-right-rally-in-st-kilda/10686966>

Extreme right-wing ‘patriot’ rally in Melbourne: Nazi salutes and scuffles, police on high alert  
<https://www.news.com.au/national/victoria/extreme-rightwing-patriot-rally-in-melbourne-hundreds-of-police-on-high-alert/news-story/9478ad1a9a4872b67f6e52ef1cbb6a91>

St Kilda beach rally: far-right and anti-racism groups face off in Melbourne  
<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/jan/05/far-right-and-anti-racism-groups-face-off-in-melbourne-flashpoint>

Reclaim the Beach: Rally at St Kilda Beach 1pm Saturday 5/1/2019  
<https://www.xyz.net.au/reclaim-beach-rally-st-kilda-beach-1pm-saturday-5-1-2019/>

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK:

*Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017*  
*Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*  
*Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017*  
*Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017*  
*Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2017/13 – Members of Parliament – Entitlements*

ASSESSMENT:

On 8 January 2018, the Audit and Assurance Team commenced an Assurance Review of Senator Anning’s travel from his appointment as a Senator in 2017 to early January 2019 to ensure the effective use of Commonwealth resources in accordance with the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (the IPEA Act) and the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act). This review included travel undertaken by Senator Anning’s wife, Mrs Fiona Anning, to ensure correct use of the family reunion travel expense in accordance with Division 2 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017*.

On 22 January 2019, staff from the Audit and Assurance Team met with Senator Anning at his Electorate Office located at the Commonwealth Parliament Office, Suite 2, Level 36, Waterfront Place, 1 Eagle St, Brisbane. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss certain trips undertaken by Senator Anning and/or Mrs Anning.

During the meeting various questions of Senator Anning were asked, including:

1. What was your parliamentary business in relation to a particular trip/s?
2. What was your dominant purpose in relation to a particular trip/s?
3. What was/is your value for money assessment when undertaking travel?
4. What is your platform as a Senator?

Senator Anning showed IPEA various documents from Queensland based constituents and others who raised concerns regarding ethnic based violence occurring in Queensland, immigration, employment and the moving of refugees to remote towns in Queensland. These issues and others were put forward by Senator Anning as being significant policy concerns for both him and his constituents.

IPEA also discussed how Senator Anning undertook a 'value for money' assessment when utilising travel expenses. Senator Anning stated that he achieves value for money by assessing the value or merits of the meeting/s and then combining other meetings in the same travel.

IPEA has reviewed Senator Anning's responses to questions, evidence shown during the interview of 22 January 2019 and additional evidence provided regarding trips undertaken during the review period.

Although there has been significant media attention regarding particular trips undertaken by Senator Anning, none of these fall outside or contravene the legislative framework. IPEA verified all travel was undertaken for the dominant purpose of Senator Anning's parliamentary business and he undertook the travel in a manner consistent with the value for money principle.

Although the majority of Senator Anning's use of expenses for the period reviewed was consistent with the legislative framework outlined in the PBR Act 2017, regulations and associated determinations, IPEA did identify two separate claims which were determined as contravening the legislative framework. Those trips being:

1. On 16 November 2017, Mrs Fiona Anning travelled from Canberra to Gladstone via Brisbane.

On 13 November 2017, Senator Anning provided IPEA with a 'Family Reunion Travel Nomination' form which listed Mrs Anning's home base as Brisbane. As Mrs Anning's home base was Brisbane the journey to Gladstone was outside of the legislative framework. The cost of the travel between Brisbane and Gladstone should be recovered.

IPEA sought information from FCM Travel Solutions who advised that an individual sector from Brisbane to Gladstone would cost \$ 580.23.

2. On 21 December 2017, Senator Anning travelled by taxi from a function to Brisbane City.

Clause 4.1 of *Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2017/13 – Members of Parliament – Entitlements* states:

A senator or member shall be provided with car transport at government expense when travelling on parliamentary business, but not including party business (other than meetings of a parliamentary political party, or of its executive, or of its committees, and the national conference of a political party, of which he or she is a member):

- (a) for direct travel between his or her home base, electorate office or place of business and the nearest airport or railway station;
- (b) in Canberra and locations within a 30 kilometre radius of Parliament House;
- (c) in other capital cities and regional centres, except within the city/centre in which a senator or member resides or has an electorate office, and between capital cities and regional centres; and
- (d) on visits in the course of parliamentary committee business.

As none of the above apply to this journey the cost of this fare was outside the legislative framework and should be recovered. The cost to be recovered is \$13.23.

3. Between March to December 2018, Senator Anning utilised Cabcharge (taxi) within Brisbane City. Senator Anning elected not to be provided with a 'private plated vehicle (PPV)' and receives additional electorate allowance in accordance with Clause 3.11 of *Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2017/23: Members of Parliament*. Senator Anning was afforded the opportunity to provide IPEA with reasons for his use of Cabcharge within the electorate but failed to do so at the writing of this report.

As advised to Senator Anning over email, IPEA has determined these transactions to be outside the relevant legislative framework and an invoice will be raised. The total cost of these taxi trips was \$753.08

4. The Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017 (effective 1 January 2018) states that a member is liable to pay the Commonwealth an amount equal to 25% of the amount contravened (section 38(4)). As this applies to the taxi trips made after 1 January 2018, a penalty of \$188.27 will be charged.

The total amount of the invoice raised will be ~~\$1,534.81~~.

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\$ 1,534.81

It should be noted that it is not IPEA's role to determine the merit of 'parliamentary business' for Senators and Members.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that you:

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Note that Invoice No. 1332925, dated 23 May 2019 has been raised.
3. A letter explaining the contravened transactions, together with an invoice was sent to Senator Anning on 23 May 2019.
4. Approve the finalisation of this matter.

— approved  
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Section 22

A/Director Audit and Assurance  
Executive Support and Assurance

23 May 2019