

Senate Standing Committees on Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee Membership

Committee Members



Chair

[Senator Louise Pratt](#)

Australian Labor Party, WA



Deputy Chair

[Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck](#)

Liberal Party of Australia, TAS



Member

[Senator the Hon James McGrath](#)

Liberal National Party of Queensland, QLD



Member

[Senator Barbara Pocock](#)

Australian Greens, SA



Member

[Senator Tony Sheldon](#)

Australian Labor Party, NSW



Member

[Senator Jana Stewart](#)

Australian Labor Party, VIC

Participating Members

Senators Penny Allman-Payne, Alex Antic, Wendy Askew, Ralph Babet, Catryna Bilyk, Simon Birmingham, Andrew Bragg, Slade Brockman, Ross Cadell, Matthew Canavan, Michaelia Cash, Claire Chandler, Raff Ciccone, Dorinda Cox, Perin Davey, Patrick Dodson, Jonathon Duniham, Mehreen Faruqi, David Fawcett, Nita Green, Karen Grogan, Pauline Hanson, Sarah Hanson-Young, Sarah Henderson, Hollie Hughes, Jane Hume, Kerryne Liddle, Susan McDonald, Bridget McKenzie, Nick McKim, Andrew McLachlan, Jim Molan, Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, Deborah O'Neill, Matt O'Sullivan, James Paterson, Fatima Payman, Marise Payne, David Pocock, Helen Polley, Gerard Rennick, Linda Reynolds, Janet Rice, Malcolm Roberts, Anne Ruston, Paul Scarr, David Shoebridge, Dean Smith, Marielle Smith, Jordon Steele-John, Glenn Sterle, Lidia Thorpe, Anne Urquhart, David Van, Jess Walsh, Larissa Waters, Peter Whish-Wilson, Linda White



PARLIAMENT
OF AUSTRALIA

HEARING PROGRAM

Budget Supplementary Estimates 2022–23

Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

Monday, 13 February – Friday, 17 February 2023

Committee Room 2S1, Parliament House, Canberra

Times listed are indicative only



Hearing location

Committee Room 2S1,
Parliament House, Canberra
Waiting room: Committee Room 2S2
Waiting overflow room: Committee Room 1S3



Broadcasts of proceedings

Television channel 112
Radio 90.3
https://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch/Parliament



Contact

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Committee rooms

Committee Room 2S1: (02) 6277 5843
Committee Room 2S2: (02) 6277 5851
Committee Room 1S3: (02) 6277 5845



Committee members

Senator Louise Pratt, Chair
Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, Deputy Chair
Senator Tony Sheldon
Senator Jana Stewart
Senator Barbara Pocock
Senator the Hon James McGrath

Ministers attending

Details to be confirmed

Secretariat

Patrick Hodder, Committee Secretary
Charlotte Lim, Estimates Officer

Monday, 13 February

Parliamentary Departments

9.00am	Parliamentary Budget Office Outcome: Inform the Parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy and the financial implications of proposals Program 1 - Parliamentary Budget Office
9.15am	Department of Parliamentary Services Outcome 1: Support the functions of Parliament and parliamentarians through the provision of professional services, advice and facilities and maintain Australian Parliament House Program 1.1 - Parliamentary Services Program 1.2 - Parliament House works Program
10.00am	Department of the Senate Outcome 1: Advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative and legislative duties Program 1.1 - Advice and Support
10.30am	Morning Tea

Prime Minister & Cabinet

10.45am	Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General Outcome 1: The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.
11.15am	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet Outcome 1: Provide high quality policy advice and support to the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, Portfolio Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries including through the coordination of government activities, policy development and program delivery Program 1.1 - Prime Minister and Cabinet
11.45am	Lunch
12.45pm	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - Outcome 1 continued
3.30pm	Afternoon Tea
3.45pm	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - Outcome 1 continued

6.30pm	Dinner
7.30pm	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - Outcome 1 continued
8.00pm	<p>Australian National Audit Office</p> <p>Outcome 1: To improve public sector performance and accountability through independent reporting on Australian Government administration to Parliament, the Executive and the public</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Financial Statements Audit Services Program 1.2 - Performance Audit Services Program 1.3 - Performance Statements Audit</p>
9.15pm	Tea Break
9.30pm	<p>Office of National Intelligence</p> <p>Outcome 1: Advancement of Australia's national interests through increased government awareness of international developments affecting Australia, and integration, coordination and evaluation of Australia's national intelligence capabilities</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Assessments and Reports Program 1.2 - Coordination and Evaluation</p>
9.45pm	National Australia Day Council

Finance Portfolio

10.00pm	<p>Australian Electoral Commission</p> <p>Outcome 1: Maintain an impartial and independent electoral system for eligible voters through active electoral role management, efficient delivery of polling services and targeted education and public awareness program</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Deliver Electoral Events</p>
11.00pm	Adjournment

Tuesday, 14 February

Prime Minister & Cabinet

9.00am	<p>Australian Public Service Commission</p> <p>Outcome 1 - Increased awareness and adoption of best practice public administration by the public service through leadership, promotion, advice and professional development, drawing on research and evaluation</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Australian Public Service Commission Program 1.2 - Judicial Office Holders' Remuneration and Entitlements</p>
9.30am	<p>Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Office for Women)</p>
10.00am	<p>Workplace Gender Equality Agency</p> <p>Outcome 1: Promote and improve gender equality in Australian workplaces including through the provision of advice and assistance to employers and the assessment and measurement of workplace gender data</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Workplace Gender Equality</p>
10.30am	Morning Tea

Finance Portfolio

10.45am	<p>Department of Finance</p> <p>Outcome 1: Support sustainable Australian Government finances through providing high quality policy advice and operational support to the government and Commonwealth entities to maintain effective and efficient use of public resources</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Budget and Financial Management</p>
12.15pm	Lunch
1.15pm	<p>Outcome 3: Support for Parliamentarians and others as required by the Australian Government through the delivery of and advice on, work expenses and allowances, entitlements and targeted programs</p> <p>Program 3.1 - Ministerial and Parliamentary Services</p>
2.15pm	<p>Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority</p> <p>Outcome 1: Support for current and former parliamentarians and others as required by the Australian Government through the delivery of, independent oversight and advice on, work resources and travel resources</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority - Travel Oversight and Reporting</p>

3.00pm	Afternoon Tea
3.15pm	Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority - Outcome 1 continued
3.45pm	<p>Future Fund Management Agency</p> <p>Outcome 1: Make provision for the Commonwealth's unfunded superannuation liabilities, payments for the creation and development of infrastructure and payments from the DisabilityCare Australia Fund and Medical Research Future Fund by managing the investment activities of the Future Fund, Nation-building funds, DisabilityCare Australia Fund and Medical Research Future Fund, inline with the Government's investment mandates</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Management of the Investment of the Future Fund Program 1.2 - Management of the Investment of the Australian Government Investment Funds</p> <p>To be examined concurrently with: Department of Finance Program 2.8 - Australian Government Investment Funds</p>
4.45pm	<p>Department of Finance</p> <p>Outcome 2: Support an efficient and high performing public sector through providing leadership to Commonwealth entities in ongoing improvements to public sector governance, including through systems, frameworks, policy, advice and service delivery</p> <p>Program 2.1 - Public Sector Governance Program 2.2 - Transforming Government Program 2.3 - Property and Construction Program 2.4 - Insurance and Risk Management Program 2.5 - Technology and Procurement Services Program 2.6 - Service Delivery Office Program 2.7 - Public Sector Superannuation</p>
6.30pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Department of Finance - Outcome 2 continued
9.15pm	Tea Break
9.30pm	<p>Digital Transformation Agency</p> <p>Outcome 1: Improve the delivery of government services by leading and coordinating whole-of-government digital and ICT strategies, policies, advice, standards and procurement, as well as supporting the delivery of shared capabilities and services that enable digital transformation</p> <p>Program 1.1 - Digital Transformation Agency</p>
10.00pm	ASC Pty Ltd
10.30pm	Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd
11.00pm	Adjournment

CEO Senate Estimates opening statement 2023

Chair and Committee Members

An opening statement at the first Estimates of the calendar year has become a tradition and I thank you once again for the opportunity to provide my reflections on the year gone and thoughts on the year ahead.

2022, opportunities to regulate through education

IPEA commenced the year with the knowledge that there would be an election. We prepared by implementing the lessons from our first election in 2019. These included early engagement with political parties to reinforce the role of IPEA and the application of the Principles, defined under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act), that regulate the use of parliamentary expenses.

Post the election, as polls were declared, IPEA made early and personal contact with the 35 newly elected parliamentarians and their staff. We provided opportunities for refresher information for returning parliamentarians and reached out to non-returning parliamentarians to discuss their post-election arrangements. From feedback this prompt and targeted engagement was well received. We will continue to build upon and refine our approach.

Education first has always been an important aspect to IPEA's approach. With the large number of newly elected parliamentarians, IPEA is working hard to build understanding of the Principles-based framework with offices, and the necessary trust with IPEA, to raise queries early and often. The response to our interactive education sessions is always very positive. In 2022, 96% of education session participants that completed our survey were satisfied with their session.

A significant piece of feedback has been confusion around 'who does what' in the parliamentary environment; particularly between IPEA and the services provided by other agencies including Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (MaPS) in the Department of Finance. In summary, IPEA is responsible for:

Domestic and International Travel:

- Personal advice
- Administration of expenses and allowances
- Travel provider (CTM) and Cabcharge.

All parliamentary work expenses:

- Reporting
- Monitoring
- Assurance and audit.

2023, opportunities to regulate through service delivery

In addition to the election, there were many influences on the parliamentary environment in 2022. For example, nearly 60 recommendations for changes - in the combined IPEA and PBR Act Review

Report¹ and the Set the Standard Review Report² – were published. These recommendations signal important opportunities for parliament to take a whole-of-system consideration of the parliamentary workplace, its culture and how to support diversity. Through applying good policy principles there is also the potential to reduce client confusion and enhance the effectiveness of services provided.

IPEA welcomes opportunities arising in 2023 from these recommendations to fulfil its dual roles of:

1. supporting parliamentarians when undertaking their important role representing all Australians and
2. providing Australians with transparency and assurance on the appropriateness of work expenses incurred by parliamentarians and their staff.

With regard to transparency, on 8 November 2022, the Government announced that publication of parliamentary Expenditure Reports from 1 July 2022 would be postponed until the second half of 2023. This is due to delays in finalising the build of the expenditure reporting module in the Parliamentary Expenses Management System or PEMS for short. IPEA continues to work with the Department of Finance, the project owner, to define, build, test and implement this functionality. Eventually, IPEA is keen to move from quarterly to monthly reports as the build is finalised, system issues are resolved and full functionality across all of PEMS is implemented.

While published Expenditure Reports are not currently available, Australians can be assured that IPEA continues to undertake our many behind the scenes assurance activities. Consistent with our ‘no surprises’ approach in previous openings statements and our responsibility for assurance on all parliamentary work expenses provided under the PBR Act, in 2023 parliamentarians can expect IPEA to look more broadly at non-travel related expenses administered by other agencies. This focus is in addition to expenses, such as Family related travel, Business Class travel and desirable destinations, previously targeted for assurance activities.

IPEA continues to lead in the parliamentary regulation arena with excellent results in the APS Census and independently conducted Client Satisfaction Survey. The most current results are available on our website. These results are a reflection of the commitment to service and integrity of all IPEAs, including staff and the Members of the Authority.

Thank you Chair, I am available for questions.

Annwyn Godwin

¹ The *Independent Expenses Authority Act 2017* (the IPEA Act) and the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act) Reviews were conducted in 2021 by the Hon Kelly O’Dwyer and the Hon Kate Ellis, completed December 2021 and tabled August 2022.

² ‘Set the standard’ the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces by the Human Rights Commission was completed in November 2021.

TRAVEL – TRAVEL ADVICE AND ADMINISTRATION (INCLUDING CTM AND SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS)

Subject/Issue

Travel administration and the provision of advice are legislated functions of IPEA. Corporate Travel Management (CTM) is contracted by IPEA to provide travel services to parliamentarians and their staff.

Key points

Travel Administration

- In the 2022-2023 Financial Year, as at 31 December 2022, IPEA processed 53,372 transactions, with a value of \$24,064,001.07, comprising:
 - 3584 TA claims for parliamentarians at a value of \$3,723,913.07
 - 9824 TA claims for staff at a value of \$7,580,094.42
 - 941 claims for international travel expenses at a value of \$1,112,634.99
 - 19,740 fare tickets at a value of \$10,308,112.79
 - 19,137 taxi and car transport claims at a value of \$928,704.54
 - 146 Unscheduled Commercial Transport claims at a value of \$410,541.26
- Previously Service Level Standards (SLS) were used to measure the performance of IPEA claims administration.
- Issues related to the new Parliamentary Expenses Management System (PEMS) have meant that we have not been able to report on, or measure, travel claim SLS since July 2022.

Travel Advice

- Measurement of Travel Advice SLS does not rely on PEMS.
- 7,817 client contacts were logged to IPEA between 1 July 2022 and 31 December 2022.
- The Advice SLS states that we will resolve 95% of queries within 2 working days. This time limit does not apply when we are awaiting 3rd party advice to resolve the query – such as waiting on ticket information or where we have asked a person to provide additional information.
- For the period 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022, we resolved 98% of queries within 2 working days against a target of 95%.

- We have measured our results against the SLS since 2020/21.
- Of the 7,817 contacts that were received by IPEA, 4,969 contacts were received by the Advice desk.
 - Of these 4,969, the main types of contacts were as follows*:
 - Staff travel (38%)
 - Parl travel (22%)
 - Reporting (3%)
 - PEMS (30%)
 - Budget (3%)
 - Audit (1%)
 - Other (4%)

*1% variation is due to rounding

- IPEA personal advice is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act). This supports our policy of not publicly disclosing IPEA's advice.

Family Reunion Travel

- In the 2022-23 Financial Year to 31 December 2022 there have been 882 family reunion tickets at a value of \$512,563.16.

Corporate Travel Management (CTM)

- Following the expiration of the previous travel services contract with FCM on 31 December 2021, the new service provider Corporate Travel Management (CTM) commenced on 1 January 2022.
- The contract between IPEA and CTM is for three years (1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024), for a value of **\$5,421,415**.
 - The contract has 3 x 1 year extension options.
- The transition of services from FCM to CTM has been relatively smooth, with some minor disruptions to clients.

If asked whether CTM has moved into Parliament House

- CTM moved into the Parliamentary Travel Office (PTO) in January 2023.

Background

- The provision of travel administration is a legislated function of IPEA.
- IPEA provides personal advice to parliamentarians and their staff about travel related expenses and allowances, and helps them resolve reporting enquiries.
- IPEA Advice responds to phone and email enquiries within published SLS. Responses are provided during standard business hours – Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, Canberra Time.

Advice:

- From IPEA's inception on 3 April 2017 to 31 December 2022, IPEA has received 58,475 unique client contacts.
 - This included
 - 29,605 contacts relating to staff travel
 - 13,330 contacts relating to Parliamentarian travel
 - 6,521 contacts relating to reporting
 - 3,085 contacts relating to PEMS
 - 409 contacts relating to elections
 - 1,592 contacts relating to Budgets
 - 3,156 contacts relating to audits
 - 777 contacts relating to other issues

Family reunion travel:

- Parliamentarians are provided with capped Family Reunion Travel to reunite with their family members when separated due to the parliamentarians' conduct of their parliamentary business. The caps are based on the location of the parliamentarian, and the family composition.
- The bulk of the cap is provided for travel to Canberra. A smaller component is available for interstate travel.
- From IPEA's inception on 3 April 2017 to 31 December 2022, there were 7275 family reunion tickets at a value of \$3,857,562.30.

Quote from IPEA website – About IPEA:

Service level standards—Claims Processing

1. *Travel claims are assessed weekly to verify 95% have been processed within an average of 7 working days and with a 90% degree of accuracy.^(a)*
2. *Requests for additional travel claim information (e.g. where the claim is incomplete) are sent within an average of 4 working days of receiving*

the initial claim. ^(b) This is measured monthly using a sample check of all requests.

3. 90% of travel-related budgets are disseminated by the third week of June. ^(b) New parliamentarians commencing after 1 July receive their budget/s within one week of official commencement. ^(b)
4. 80% of client survey respondents are satisfied with IPEA's travel claim processing as measured in the IPEA client satisfaction survey.

^(a) Incorrect/incomplete claims are not included.

^(b) Except where IPEA is waiting on essential information from 3rd party providers.

Service level standards—Advice

1. All calls are acknowledged, with 95% of calls acknowledged within 1 day. ^(a) This is measured bi-monthly using call system statistics.
2. All requests for advice are resolved, with 95% of requests for advice resolved within 2 days. ^(a,b) This is measured bi-monthly using call system statistics.
3. Quality and accuracy levels for advice are achieved, with 95% of advice provided being accurate and of a high quality. This is measured with a sample check of advice.
4. 80% of client survey respondents are satisfied with IPEA's advice as measured in the IPEA client satisfaction survey.

^(a) During hours: 9am to 5pm—Monday-Friday EST (except for Public Holidays).

^(b) Except where IPEA is waiting on essential information from 3rd party providers.

- Service level standards are published on IPEA's website in the 'About IPEA' section

Corporate Travel Management

- The Commonwealth Procurement Rules require that an open approach to the market be conducted to identify the best Value for Money supplier.
- Following a two stage Open Tender process in 2021, Corporate Travel Management (CTM) Pty Ltd was chosen as the provider that represented best value for money for the Commonwealth and a contract was entered into on 30 September 2021.

Date: 24 January 2023
Group/Branch: TEA
Cleared by Branch Manager: Christina Grant
Contact Officer: § 22(1)
Telephone No: § 22(1)
Mobile No:

TABLE

Claim Administration	3 Apr 2017 to 31 Dec 2022	Transactions	Total value	Transact per month	Value per month	Column1
all transactions		646,648	\$260,755,737.82	9,371.71	\$3,779,068.66	
Car Transport - Parliamentarians		2,628	\$144,997.24	38.09	\$2,101.41	
Car Parking - Parliamentarians		2,537	\$160,240.15	36.77	\$2,322.32	
UCT Cabcharge		7,856	\$260,683.34	113.86	\$3,778.02	
UCT Flight and Hire Car		5,663	\$7,109,619.32	82.07	\$103,037.96	
Car Transport - Staff		247,678	\$10,660,132.55	3,589.54	\$154,494.67	
Fares - Parliamentarians		61,981	\$43,525,850.93	898.28	\$630,809.43	
Fares - Family		7,275	\$3,857,562.30	105.43	\$55,906.70	
Fares - Staff		144,714	\$59,146,417.40	2,097.30	\$857,194.46	
Allowances - Parliamentarians		41,785	\$35,938,228.84	605.58	\$520,843.90	
Allowances - Staff		113,138	\$80,336,584.86	1,639.68	\$1,164,298.33	
Overseas Travel		11,393	\$19,615,420.90	165.12	\$284,281.46	
Advice	3 Apr 2017 to 31 Dec 2022	Client contact	% of total	Contact per month	Contacts per day	Closure rate
All advice		58,475		847.5	39.0	99.23%
staff travel		29,605	50.6%	429.1	19.7	
Parl travel		13,330	22.8%	193.2	8.9	
reporting		6,521	11.2%	94.5	4.3	
PEMS		3085	5.3%	44.7	2.1	
election		409	0.7%	5.9	0.3	
budget		1592	2.7%	23.1	1.1	
audit		3156	5.4%	45.7	2.1	
other*		777	1.3%	11.3	0.5	

*Other includes enquiries relating to budgets, former parliamentarians, and family reunion travel

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPENSES

Subject/Issue

International travel expenses for travel between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2022

Key points

- IPEA administers official international travel expenses in accordance with the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*, the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*, and related regulations and determinations.
- The Prime Minister must approve official Ministerial international travel.
- The Presiding Officers approve delegation travel administered by IPEA.
- The international travel costs administered by IPEA generally include airfares, allowances, accommodation, meals and ground transport.
- Flight availability has been problematic this financial year - this has led to increased flight costs.
 - For example due to limited availability two one way tickets must be purchased on different airlines, instead of a single airline return ticket. Where this occurs flight costs increase as two one way tickets are generally more expensive than a return ticket.
 - Lack of flight availability has also increased competition for, and therefore cost of, flights.

Visits administered by IPEA

International Trips – 1 January to 21 May 2022 (pre-election):

- Between 1 January 2022 and 21 May 2022, IPEA administered 9 official international visits and 2 cancelled trips - one of which incurred expenses.

International Trips – 22 May 2022 to 31 December 2022 (post election):

- From 22 May 2022 to 31 December 2022, IPEA administered expenses for 133 international visits and 3 cancelled trips which incurred expenses.

- **Attachment A** provides the number and value of trips for Ministers only. Further trip data including Assistant Ministers, Chairs of Committees, delegations and individual parliamentarians may be provided on notice.

Background

- The PBR framework provides for international travel by Presiding Officers, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of a Minority Party and Parliamentary Delegations.
- The PBR framework specifies approval requirements for each type of international travel.
- Presiding Officers are provided an annual budget for international travel, they may approve international travel for another parliamentarian to represent them under this budget.
- The Leader of the Opposition has their own annual budget for international travel. The Leader may take travel under this budget or approve for another member of his/her party to travel under this budget.
- The Leader of a Minority party has their own annual budget for international travel. The Leader may approve another member of his/her party to travel under this budget.
- Both Presiding Officers must approve delegation travel. A program is approved at the beginning of the calendar year. Additional delegations may be added to the program throughout the year.

Date: 24/01/2023
Group/Branch: Christina Grant
Cleared by Branch Manager: Travel, Education and Advice
Contact Officer: § 22(1)
Telephone No: § 22(1)
Mobile No: § 22(1)

Attachment A

Minister Trips as at 31 December 2022* (Further costs may be pending)

	Visits 2021-22	Visits 2022-23	*Total costs 2021-22	*Total costs 2022-23
Prime Minister The Hon Anthony Albanese MP	3	4	\$138,319.68	\$259,866.10
Deputy Prime Minister The Hon Richard Marles MP	2	7	\$15,524.67	\$79,888.00
Treasurer The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP		3		\$22,035.18
Foreign Minister Senator the Hon Penny Wong	6	11	\$35,348.46	\$150,406.51
Special Minister of State, Minister for Trade and Tourism, and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate Senator the Hon Don Farrell	2	5	\$32,382.17	\$160,683.96
Minister for Climate Change and Energy, The Hon Chris Bowen MP		3		\$55,249.48
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for		1		\$17,199.85

Emergency Management Senator the Hon Murray Watt				
Minister for Industry and Science The Hon Ed Husic MP	1		\$1876.46	
Minister for Home Affairs and Cyber Security The Hon Clare O'Neil MP	1	3	\$11,218.18	\$94,687.27
Minister for the Environment and Water The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP	1	2	\$5773.60	\$15,018.15
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister of the Arts and Leader of the House The Hon Tony Burke MP		1		\$60,202.92
Minister for Defence Personnel and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon Matt Keogh		1		\$24,182.37
Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP		1		\$13,911.05
Minister for Women, Minister for Finance,				

and Minister for the Public Service, Senator The Hon Katy Gallagher		1		\$3,873.46
Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth, The Hon Dr Anne Aly MP		1		\$6,770.23

SPECIAL PURPOSE AIRCRAFT

Special Purpose Aircraft (SPA).

Key points

- IPEA does not have oversight of SPA, this is a matter for the Department of Defence (Defence)
- SPA Guidelines are also a matter for Defence - IPEA does not have oversight of the SPA Guidelines
- The SPA Guidelines include, inter alia, that:
 - IPEA receives and reviews SPA manifests from time-to-time at the discretion of Defence
 - IPEA reviews manifests to identify individuals subject to a travel related budget including spouses of non-office holders, nominees, dependents, designated persons and electorate staff
 - Where such individuals are identified, IPEA requests an invoice from Defence for that passenger's flights
- Once processed by IPEA, the payment of these invoices is deducted from the relevant parliamentarian's budget and reported accordingly

If asked:

- IPEA has not received the detailed manifest from Defence for the period December 2021 to 20 January 2023.

Background

- SPA includes air passenger transport operated by Defence for the Commonwealth.
- Total dollar amount of SPA fights invoiced by IPEA as at 20 October 2022.

Financial Year	Value of invoices
2018-19	\$2,930.74
2019-20	\$17,116.42
2020-21*	\$20,940.54
2021-22*	\$5,271.93
2022-23*	\$0

*To date (24 January 2023), noting that IPEA has not received the SPA manifest from Defence for December 2021 to 20 January 2023.

Date: 24/01/23
Group/Branch: Travel, Education and Advice
Cleared by Branch Manager: Christina Grant
Contact Officer: § 22(1)
Telephone No: § 22(1)
Mobile No:

TRAVEL ALLOWANCE IN CANBERRA - PARLIAMENTARIANS

Subject/Issue

Parliamentarians may claim travel allowance (TA) for each overnight stay in accommodation in Australia that is not their home base. TA covers accommodation, meals and incidentals.

Key points

- Parliamentarians must apply the obligations when claiming TA, ensuring they are prepared to publicly defend that amounts claimed:
 - were for the dominant purpose of parliamentary business
 - represented value for money, and
 - were incurred in good faith.
- In Canberra, there is a single rate of TA regardless of whether commercial and non-commercial accommodation is accessed.
- TA rates for parliamentarians are set by the Remuneration Tribunal in the *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2022*. These were last updated on 28 August 2022.
- The current TA rate for an overnight stay is \$299 in Canberra.

If asked about travel allowance claimed by individual parliamentarians

- IPEA does not generally comment on the travel expenses claimed by individual parliamentarians.

Background

- Section 31 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (PBR Act) requires that the Commonwealth pay travel allowances:

31 Commonwealth must pay travel allowances

- (1) The Commonwealth must pay the travel allowances for a member that are prescribed by the regulations.
- (2) For domestic travel, the allowances are payable at the rates determined from time to time by the Remuneration Tribunal under section 45.

Note: For travel overseas, allowances (if any) are payable at the rates prescribed by the regulations

- Section 10 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* (PBR Regulations):
 - defines ‘Canberra’ as being within a 30 kilometre radius of Parliament House
 - establishes that travel allowance covers accommodation, meals and incidental expenses for each night the member stays in accommodation in an Australian location that is not the member’s home base:

10 Australian travel allowance

- (1) For the purposes of subsection 31(1) of the Act, an allowance (the *Australian travel allowance*) for accommodation, meals and incidental expenses is prescribed for each night the member stays in accommodation in Australia that is not the member’s home base.

Note: The rate of Australian travel allowance is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal: see subsections 31(2) and 45(1) of the Act.

- Part 5 of the *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2022* confirms that the rates for travel allowance are set in accordance with the PBR Act and Regulations:

PART 5 – RATES OF AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL ALLOWANCE FOR TRAVEL WITHIN AUSTRALIA

Rates

5.1 For subsection 31(2) of the PBR Act, the rates in the table in Schedule B are determined as the nightly rates of Australian travel allowance payable in accordance with section 10 of the PBR Regulations.

- Schedule B of that Determination sets the nightly rate of travel allowance for stays in Canberra at \$299.00:

SCHEDULE B – TRAVEL ALLOWANCE RATES

Locality	MEMBERS MENTIONED IN CLAUSE 5.2	OTHER MEMBERS
Canberra	\$299	\$299

Date: 24 January 2023

Group/Branch: TEA

Cleared by Branch Manager: Christina Grant

Contact Officer: s 22(1)

Telephone No: s 22(1)

Mobile No: s 22(1)

ELECTORATE SUPPORT BUDGET (ESB)

Subject/Issue

The Electorate Support Budget (ESB) consists of a staff travel component calculated by Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) and a relief staff salary component calculated by Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS).

Key points

- Parliamentarians are provided with an ESB to enable the travel of electorate employees and employment of relief staff.
- The ESB is a dollar budget calculated in accordance with Schedule C of the *Determination 2020/15 Staff travel and relief staff arrangements* (Attachment A).
- The ESB is made up of an electorate staff travel component and a relief staff component.
 - The electorate staff travel component is calculated by IPEA and maintained by IPEA in the PEMS system.
 - The relief staff component is calculated by M&PS and maintained by M&PS in the PEMS system.
- IPEA advises parliamentarians of their total ESB amounts by email at the beginning of each financial year.
- Offices may check the status of their budget, and review transactions administered against their budget, in PEMS.
- As a courtesy IPEA contacted 15 Parliamentarian's offices on 9 January 2023 advising 80% or more of their 2022/23 ESB had been expended.
- Each parliamentarian is responsible for managing their own ESB. Invoices are raised for overspends of this budget.
- When processing travel claims, IPEA attempts to ensure the budget is not exceeded. However, where flights exceeding the budget have been flown, flight costs may be paid by IPEA and then invoiced to the parliamentarian to ensure the provider is reimbursed in accordance with contractual requirements.
- Claims exceeding the budget are flagged with the parliamentarian's office.
- The processing of employment contracts against an ESB is a matter for M&PS.

If asked about increase to ESB:

- A parliamentarian may write to the Minister to request an increase to their ESB. Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services is responsible for related briefing.
 - Only 1 ESB increase has been administered so far this financial year.

PEMS issues impacting ESB

- IPEA is aware of three system issues that may have impacted some ESB:
 - Issue 1 - an issue with the travel of nominated staff incorrectly being deducted from the budget;
 - Issue 2 - an issue with the system duplicating some payments (Cabcharge) against the ESB.
 - Issue 3 – an issue with the system not enabling IPEA to adjust travel provider or cabcharge transactions that have been suspended due to a role change.
- All issues have been escalated to the Department of Finance for resolution.
 - ⊖ Issue 1 - has been resolved and work has been completed to remove nominee travel transactions from the ESB.
 - Issue 2 is currently being investigated as a matter of priority and work is underway to remove these duplicated transactions from the ESB.
 - Issue 3 is currently being investigated as a matter of priority. Once a fix has been implemented, IPEA will address outstanding suspended transactions.

Background

- Schedule C of *Determination 2020/15: Staff travel and relief arrangements* provide that the ESB for a parliamentarian is calculated at the beginning of each financial year and comprises of the electorate staff travel component and the relief staff component.
 - Each budget has an electorate staff travel component (calculated by IPEA) and a relief staff component (calculated by M&PS).
- ESBs are calculated on a pro rata basis for the financial year in which a Senator or Member commences his or her term.
- Where an ESB is exhausted, a parliamentarian is not permitted to draw from their ESB for the following year – instead, any costs that are incurred beyond the ESB become a debt owed to the Commonwealth which must be repaid.
 - Unused funds from an ESB cannot be carried over to the following year.
- ESB adjustment requests would be directed to the Special Minister of State.
- The formulas to calculate both the electorate staff travel and relief staff components of the ESB are both contained in the Schedule C of the Determination.
- Relevant provisions of the Determination are included in Attachment A.

Date: 24/01/2023
Group/Branch: TEA
Cleared by Branch Manager: Christina Grant
Contact Officer: § 22(1)
Telephone No: § 22(1)
Mobile No:

ATTACHMENT A

Schedule C, Determination 2020/15: Staff travel and relief

SCHEDULE C

Calculation of the Electorate Support Budget

34. Calculation of the Electorate Support Budget 34. Subject to items 35 to 38, the Electorate Support Budget is calculated at the commencement of each financial year as the sum of:

- (a) the electorate staff travel component; and
- (b) the relief staff component.

35. The Electorate Support Budget is calculated pro rata, on the basis of the number of calendar days remaining, for the financial year in which a Senator or Member commences his or her term.

36. The relief staff component will be adjusted in line with changes to the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification.

37. The relief staff component will be adjusted pro rata where a Member is allocated, or ceases to be allocated, an additional position for a second and/or third official electorate office.

38. The Special Minister of State may approve changes to the Electorate Support Budget for any Senator or Member.

39. If the Electorate Support Budget for a year is exhausted, a Senator or Member may not draw from the Electorate Support Budget for the following year. The costs beyond the Electorate Support Budget are a debt owed to the Commonwealth and must be repaid by the Senator or Member. Unused funds may not be carried over to the following year.

Electorate staff travel component

40. Except as provided at items 41, 42 and 43, the electorate staff travel component is calculated on the basis of:

- (a) 20 return economy airfares (fully flexible) between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
- (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra;
- (c) taxi fares and/or motor vehicle allowance to and from the relevant airports for the 20 flights above; and
- (d) an amount for other travel as follows:

Senator/Member	Electorate Size	\$
Member	0-199 km ²	300
Member	200-999 km ²	500
Member	1,000-9,999 km ²	700
Member	10,000-99,999 km ²	1000
Member	100,000-199,999 km ²	8132
Member	200,000-499,999 km ²	10 132
Member	500,000 km ² or greater	12 132
Senators for the NT	-	9000
All other senators	-	500

41. Where a Senator or Member's primary electorate office is located within 150km of Canberra by road, the electorate staff travel component is calculated at the commencement of each financial year on the basis of:

- (a) the value of motor vehicle allowance payable for 20 return motor vehicle trips between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
- (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra; and
- (c) an amount for other travel as set out at item 40(d).

42. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the Member for Bean and Senators for the ACT is calculated on the basis of:

- (a) three return economy airfares (fully flexible) between Canberra and Norfolk Island;
- (b) eight nights of travelling allowance at the commercial rate applicable to Norfolk Island; and
- (c) an amount of \$2,000 for other travel.

43. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the following Senators and Members is calculated as follows:

Senator/Member	\$
Member for Canberra	2000
Member for Fenner	2000
Member for Eden-Monaro	5000
Senator whose electorate office is in Queanbeyan	5000

Relief staff component

44. The relief staff component is calculated on the basis of:

- (a) 150 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification; and
- (b) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a second official electorate office; and
- (c) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a third official electorate office.

IPEA EDUCATION

Subject/Issue

IPEA conducts a range of education activities to inform and support parliamentarians and their staff in their use of travel resources related to their parliamentary business.

Key facts and figures

Between 1 July 2022 and 31 December 2022, IPEA have conducted the following education sessions:

Education Sessions held:	1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022	Since last Estimates (8 November 2022 to 31 December 2022)
General education	29	4
Electorate office visit	3	2
PEMS training	6	1
Ministerial staff training	3	0
TOTAL	41	7

Key points

- Parliamentarians and their staff have noted their appreciation for IPEA education sessions.
- On 18 January IPEA opened registrations to parliamentarians and their staff for our February to March 2023 sessions.
- The sessions scheduled between 17 February and 5 March 2023 includes:
 - Face-to-face education sessions to be held in Australian capital cities
 - Electorate office visits as requested upon registration.
- Further face-to-face and virtual education sessions are planned for later in 2023.
- IPEA has educated more than 625 clients since 2017.

Background

IPEA delivered education sessions to a range of clients, including Office Managers, Advisers and Office staff as well as to new and retiring parliamentarians.

The education sessions cover the Parliamentary Business Resources framework, staff travel, travel advice and administration, assurance, audit and reporting, and PEMS.

Date: 24/01/2023
Group/Branch: TEA
Cleared by Branch Manager: Christina Grant
Contact Officer: § 22(1)
Telephone No: § 22(1)
Mobile No:

IPEA MEMBERS

Subject/Issue

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) Members are part-time statutory appointments made under section 16 of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (the IPEA Act).

Key facts and figures

- The IPEA Members are:

Name	Position	Reappointed	Ends
Jillian Segal AO	Chair	1 July 2022	30 June 2025
John Conde AO	Member <i>ex officio</i>		
The Hon Gary Gray AO	Member	1 July 2022	30 June 2027
Dr Julianne Jaques KC	Member	1 July 2022	30 June 2026
The Hon Dennis Cowdroy AO KC	Member	1 July 2022	30 June 2024

- IPEA Members are responsible for the functions of IPEA under section 12 of the IPEA Act, including auditing and reporting on parliamentarians' work expenses, and providing advice to parliamentarians and their staff in relation to travel expenses. These functions are delegated to IPEA's CEO and staff to be performed under the Members' guidance.
- Section 15 of the IPEA Act prescribes that IPEA Members must include:
 - either a former Commonwealth judicial officer, or a former judge of the Supreme Court of a State or Territory (Hon Dennis Cowdroy AO KC)
 - a former member of parliament (Hon Gary Gray AO)
 - a person who the Minister is satisfied has substantial experience or knowledge and significant standing in the field of auditing (Ms Jillian Segal AO)
 - where there are five members of the Authority, a person who the Minister is satisfied has substantial experience or knowledge and

significant standing in either the field of public administration or corporate governance (Dr Julianne Jaques KC).

- The IPEA Act prescribes that the President of the Remuneration Tribunal (currently Mr John Conde AO) is an *ex officio* Member of IPEA.
- The appointment of IPEA's first Members ended on 30 June 2022. All, except the Hon Jeffery Spender KC, were reappointed. The appointment of Members is the responsibility of the Department of Finance.

Key points

- The salary and allowances for IPEA Members are set by the Remuneration Tribunal. Currently, the Chair of IPEA receives an annual fee of \$79,760 and Members \$39,880. Fees are disbursed to Members fortnightly through the IPEA payroll system, with the exception of the President of the Remuneration Tribunal and also the Hon Gary Gray AO.
- The Members met 6 times from 1 December 2021 to 31 December 2022, 5 times in the 2022 calendar year.
- The Hon Dennis Cowdroy AO KC replaced the Hon Jeffrey Spender KC as an IPEA Member on 1 July 2022.

If asked: What role do the Members perform?

- The Members are responsible for providing oversight of IPEA's functions, including providing travel advice and administration, reporting, and audit and assurance.

If asked: Do you monitor the IPEA Members' travel expenses?

- All Member travel occurs in accordance with the relevant Remuneration Tribunal determination. This is subject to a number of internal controls such as delegate approval. [if pressed] Members' travel may be subject to internal and external audits.

If asked: What are your reporting arrangements with the Members?

- In accordance with section 37 of the IPEA Act, the IPEA CEO works in consultation with the IPEA Members. Section 32 of the IPEA Act enables Members to delegate any or all of their functions to the IPEA CEO and staff.
- The CEO has regular telephone discussions and meetings with the IPEA Chair. In addition, the CEO provides a comprehensive report on IPEA operations at each Members' meeting. Any critical issues, such as an

application for a ruling, are brought to the attention of Members out of session.

If asked: What is the relationship or reporting arrangements between IPEA/the Members and the Special Minister of State?

- Both the Chair and CEO have regular meetings with both the Special Minister of State and Shadow SMOS and their offices.
- I stress that IPEA is an independent agency. We also adhere to the public service Values and Code of Conduct.
- As you may be aware, as the CEO of IPEA, prior to the pandemic, I met regularly with parliamentarians on a one-on-one basis to explain in person what IPEA is here to do and answer any questions. I will continue to seek these meetings either in person or via phone or videoconference, with as many parliamentarians as possible throughout the course of this year.

Date: February 2023
Group/Branch: Corporate Governance and Strategy
Cleared by Branch Manager: Michael Frost
Contact Officer: Michael Frost
Telephone No: § 22(1)
Mobile No: § 22(1)

CEO BRIEF

Estimates – February 2023
Contact Officer – Michael Frost

NEW IPEA WEBSITE

Subject/Issue

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) will be launching a new website in February or March 2023.

Key points

- IPEA's new website was expected to be launched in November 2022. It is delayed due to complexities with the build of the Expenditure Report pages and related ongoing validation and approval of all the historical datasets prior to loading on the new site.
- The project used 2 external providers sourced from the Department of Finance's GovCMS Drupal Services Panel:
 - one delivered a site assessment, to identify whether a new build could deliver hosting cost savings and a more efficient reporting function, and to recommend a new architecture and design
 - cost \$37,408 (GST inclusive)
 - one is delivering the new site build based on the CEO approved new architecture and design
 - cost \$207,851 (GST inclusive)
- There will be a second build phase once the new PEMS reports structure is available, to accommodate any changes in the data and format.
- During this time we will also implement affordable improvements based on user feedback.

Background

Why we needed to rebuild the website:

- the current site is no longer able to support the expenditure reporting data uploads:
 - to aid performance issues IPEA removed all 2017 and 2018 data
 - after the removal performance issues were still experienced on the IPEA site

- 2017 and 2018 data is expected to be returned on the new site
- an upgrade to the site content management system, Drupal on GovCMS, required a complete rebuild
- to investigate whether the site could be hosted on a cheaper GovCMS service (around \$20K per annum compared to the current \$100K)
- to simplify the data upload process so that non-technical staff could manage without external developer assistance
- an aging design at 5 years old no longer follows modern website principles, including for accessibility
- responding to stakeholder feedback and client user experience.

Stakeholder inputs to the site assessment included:

- data: website analytics and client satisfaction surveys
- surveys: all IPEA staff, all parliamentarians' office managers survey, media contacts
- workshops: IPEA leadership team and staff groups.

What is changing:

- less information in attachments, moved to pages with a download and print option, quicker for users
- improved accessibility
- less layers making information easier to find
- bringing forward information users advise is difficult to find including travel allowances pages, forms and positions vacant
- greater interactivity and functionality of expenditure reporting data through the use of filters (for example filtering by state/territory, party and role).

Date: 30 January 2023

Group/Branch: Corporate, Governance and Strategy

Cleared by Branch Manager: Michael Frost

Contact Officer: s 22(1)

Telephone No: s 22(1)

Mobile No: s 22(1)

MEDIA

Subject/Issue

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) conducts a range of media activities.

Key points

- As at 30 January 2023, IPEA has received and responded to 247 media enquiries in total since its inception (1 July 2017) with 3 since the November 2022 estimates brief.
- The 3 top trending media enquiry themes historically are:
 - expenditure reporting (49)
 - audit and assurance (44)
 - domestic travel expenses (38).
- The media enquiry topics in the briefing period related to:
 - expenditure reporting transition to PEMS (2)
 - a parliamentarian's debt (1).
- A number of online news (3), broadcast media (15) and Blog (2) articles as well as social media comments have been published during the reporting period about the current delays with IPEA publishing expenditure reports. Most significantly:
 - The Canberra Times on 8 November 2022 – \$66m expenses system for federal parliamentarians suspended (Attachment A)
 - The Guardian on 13 January 2023 – Public left in the dark on federal MPs' use of taxpayer-funded VIP jets (Attachment B).
- A Canberra Times article on 24 November 2022 about public service unscheduled leave reported in the State of the Service Report 2021-22 stated that IPEA was one of 2 agencies with the highest rate of sick leave at 13.6 days.

Background

- IPEA responds to the majority of media enquiries with:
 - ‘we do not comment on individual parliamentarians’ expenses’ and instead suggest journalists make their enquiries with the relevant parliamentarian
 - ‘we handle all allegations of misuse in line with our protocol for Dealing with Misuse of Parliamentary Work Expenses’ (if there is an allegation of misuse).
- Since the November 2022 estimates brief, IPEA has not published any media releases.
- IPEA includes a media centre on its website to provide information and resources for the media. Forty-eight journalists are currently subscribed to receive email alerts and update notifications.



Media monitoring

- IPEA’s media monitoring is provided by Meltwater, under a two year initial contract, 28 June 2019 to 27 June 2021, with the second of two possible one-year extensions implemented to 30 June 2023.
- The total cost for the contract (4 years) is \$176,227 (GST inclusive).

Twitter

- IPEA has a Twitter account which is monitored daily and is IPEA’s primary method of notifying the public when quarterly expenditure reports and audit reports are published. We also post other IPEA and community news items. IPEA joined Twitter in April 2017 and has since published 81 tweets. We currently have 425 followers.
- All tweets published since the November 2022 estimates brief:

Date	Tweet
14 November 2022	Support International Fraud Awareness week https://fraudweek.com  The image is a promotional graphic for Fraud Awareness Week. It features a dark blue background with a pattern of small white dots and larger yellow stars. On the left, the text 'Be a hero. Fight fraud.' is written in white. In the center, there is a shield-shaped logo with a blue border. Inside the shield, the words 'OFFICIAL SUPPORTER' are at the top, 'FRAUD AWARENESS' is in large red and white letters in the middle, and 'WEEK' is at the bottom. Below the shield, the dates 'November 13-19, 2022' are written in white.

<p>23 December 2022</p>	<p>IPEA's office is closed from Monday 26 December 2022, reopening on Tuesday 3 January 2023. We wish all our followers a happy and safe holiday season.</p> 
<p>11 January 2023</p>	<p>IPEA is excited to launch the 2023 temporary employment register. Register now via our employment page: https://ipea.gov.au/about-ipea/employment</p> 

Date: 30 January 2023
Group/Branch: Corporate, Governance and Strategy
Cleared by Branch Manager: Michael Frost
Contact Officer: s 22(1)
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Mobile No: s 22(1)



08 Nov 2022
Author: Karen Barlow
Article type: Publication
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AVE: \$3279.88

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BROKEN Major problems to be revealed in 'unworkable' \$66m system

MP expenses suspended

EXCLUSIVE

Karen Barlow
Chief political correspondent

THE controversial \$66 million expenses system for federal parliamentarians spending taxpayer dollars is to have its reporting suspended until mid next year and is to be referred to the Auditor-General after a cost

blow out and a June software upgrade left it virtually unworkable.

The Canberra Times understands the Special Minister of State Don Farrell will make an announcement on Tuesday morning, outlining major problems with the 2018-introduced digital Parliamentary Expenses Management System, or PEMS,

which has long been the subject of bitter complaints from parliamentarians and staff.

Run by the Department of Finance, PEMS superseded a paper-based system and is used to manage and monitor office and travels expenses such as staff leave, staff allowances, MP travel claims, office budgets, printing, phone and internet bills.

It was a Turnbull government initiative in the wake of the "Choppergate" spending saga involving former speaker Bronwyn Bishop.

However, there have been cases of overpayments, underpayments, late payments, incorrect claims, incorrect reports and money sent to the wrong recipients.

In opposition, Senator

Farrell had pursued the Coalition and officials over the functioning of PEMS, including hundreds of questions at estimates hearings. Under his questioning in 2021, alleged cases of fraud involving former staff linked to the program were revealed as causing cost blowouts.

Soon after Labor took office, he ordered an internal

investigation into the system.

It is understood that, while MP and staff claims can be processed, the problems found with PEMS were worse than expected.

There has been a cost blow out with the system, with the latest estimate revealing the budget has almost doubled over four years.

Continued Page 4



08 Nov 2022
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Expense system suspended with problems revealed

From Page 1

The *Canberra Times* understands PEMS has cost just over \$66 million to run over four years to August 31. The expenses system was initially budgeted to cost \$38.1 million.

Last year, the department indicated was "keeping a very close eye" on spending, but it also blamed the COVID-19 pandemic for the delays.

"I have made the decision as Special Minister of State to announce a pause on publishing parliamentary expenditure reports until the second half of 2023, some detailed information on the work underway to rectify the system, a referral of this project to the Auditor-General for Audit Office consideration," Senator Farrell is expected to outline.

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) releases reports based on PEMS claims every quarter in a bid to ensure politicians are accountable for the way they spend millions in taxpayer dollars.

PEMS was first developed in 2018, but problems with its functioning have been public. The Finance-run website offers a dedicated help desk and training for users to navigate its "secure online portal" for phones and desktops.

But in a concerning move for transparency and accountability, the expenses system has not been able to develop its regular quarterly expenditure reports for IPEA since a major software upgrade which took place in June 2022, a month after the election.

Such reports reveal expenses related to parliamentarians' travel allowance, of-



Senator Don Farrell.
Picture by Dion Georgopoulos

office admin, telecommunications, family travel and staff expenses. It is understood there is literally no capacity to compile the reports.

MPs, senators and parliamentary staff are being advised that expenses claims can still be submitted at this time.

Previous quarterly IPEA reports showing millions of taxpayer dollars spent on expenses are regarded as accurate.

Senator Farrell has been highly critical of the expenses management system in the past, laying blame with the Coalition.

"The parliamentary expenses system needed updating but the government has badly mishandled the process," he said in May 2021.

Correspondence will be sent on Tuesday to all parliamentarians about the problems with PEMS and the pause in quarterly reporting.

Reforms to the federal parliamentary entitlements system were enacted in 2017/18 - in the wake of the infamous Bronwyn Bishop "choppergate" scandal - and designed to increase clarity for MPs, and transparency and accountability for taxpayers.

Attachment B

Public left in the dark on federal MPs' use of taxpayer-funded VIP jets Key reporting systems designed to stop reporting have been offline for an extended period

Christopher Knaus

Fri 13 Jan 2023 01.00 AEDT

The loss of two key transparency systems has left the public blind to politicians' use of taxpayer-funded travel and expenses, including trips taken in costly VIP government jets.

Reporting systems run by the [independent parliamentary expenses authority](#) (Ipea) and the [department of defence](#) are both currently inactive, and are expected to remain offline for extended periods.

A software problem has left Ipea unable to publish its quarterly reports on MP expenses, a key transparency measure designed to stop reporting and expense misuse.

It has not published any data on MP expenses since October and does not expect to be able to resume publishing its quarterly reports until "the second half of 2023", when it is expected to transition to a new reporting system.

The special minister of state, Don Farrell, has authorised a lengthy postponement of the quarterly expense reports, and says the former government botched the upgrade of the expenses reporting system, known as the parliamentary expenses management system (PEMS).

Farrell announced last year that he had asked the auditor general to review the implementation of the project.

"Labor has raised multiple concerns over a number of years with PEMS, including repeated questioning at Senate estimates since the project's commencement," Farrell said. "This should have never occurred."

He said work was now well under way to complete the new PEMS reporting module, and that "reporting will return in the second half of this year".

Hi [@TrapperJohn84](#)

Due to transitioning to the new Parliamentary Expenses Mgt System, Nov Estimates was informed "On the advice of the relevant agencies, the Special Minister of State has authorised a postponement of parliamentary quarterly reports until the second half of 2023"

— IPEA (@ipeaAusGov) [January 10, 2023](#)

The department of defence, meanwhile, has chosen to temporarily stop publishing its biannual reports about the use of its RAAF "special purpose" jets, which are used by the prime minister and senior ministers and their staff. The flights are thought to cost about \$4,600 an hour and the defence reports were the only way for the public to know how they were being used.

Defence says it is reviewing the guidelines around the publication of the reports due to security concerns, in consultation with the Australian federal police and the Department of Finance.

The government has not published updated details of the flights since August 2021, almost 18 months ago. The last disclosed flights were for those taken in July and December 2020.

This means taxpayers, who fund the flights, do not know how they were used for the entirety of 2021 and 2022.

Defence did not say when its review would be concluded or when it might resume publishing the reports.

“This review will ensure that security considerations are balanced with the need to remain accountable and transparent in the use of a public asset,” a spokesperson said.

“The revised Guidelines will be presented for Government consideration to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.”

“Publishing of Special Purpose Aircraft schedules will be informed by the review.”

Both reporting systems are frequently used by news outlets, including the Guardian, to expose MP expense scandals and rorts. In 2020, the Guardian used both reporting systems to reveal that [cabinet ministers had billed taxpayers to travel to a political fundraiser](#), the then deputy prime minister Michael McCormack had taken a [private RAAF jet](#) to Melbourne ahead of the Melbourne Cup, and Pauline Hanson had billed taxpayers for a trip to Western Australia where she [engaged in political fundraising](#).

Clancy Moore, the chief executive of Transparency International Australia, said the failure to disclose MP travel expenses and the use of special purpose flights meant that “important information is being hidden from the public”.

“For many years, it’s a standard transparency measure that MPs’ travel and expenses are disclosed every three months and special purpose flights every six months,” Moore said. “This helps build accountability and limit the risk of rorting and dodgy travel claims.”

The Greens senator David Shoebridge said the loss of special purpose flight reporting meant Australians have had “zero transparency” about the use of taxpayer-funded jets for the past two years.

“This is public money using public resources and there should be a clear obligation to disclose,” he said.

“This was a critical period during the pandemic when travel was extremely difficult for most Australians so scrutiny about politicians’ travel is especially important.

“It’s hard to accept that an all-purpose AFP secrecy blanket should be over these flights to protect MPs from scrutiny.”