



Australian Government

**Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority**

Assurance Review 2023/001

Desirable Destination - Spring Racing Carnival 2022

Travel to, within and return from Melbourne and
Sydney between 15 October and 12 November 2022

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Executive summary

1. The Spring Racing Carnival (SRC) in Melbourne and Sydney, particularly the Melbourne Cup Carnival, are events which are considered desirable destinations for the purposes of the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA)'s Audit & Assurance program.
2. IPEA conducted an Assurance Review of parliamentarians' travel to, from and within Melbourne and Sydney for the period 15 October 2022 to 12 November 2022, with a focus on travel associated with any SRC events.
3. The Assurance Review forms part of IPEA's 3 Year Assurance Plan.

Assurance Review Findings

4. The Assurance Review assessed whether the use of travel resources by parliamentarians associated with SRC event dates was in accordance with the legislative framework.
5. Of the 16 parliamentarians contacted in relation to this Assurance Review:
 - two parliamentarians elected to repay associated expenses; and
 - 14 parliamentarians' travel did not require further investigation.

Scope and Purpose

6. The scope of this Assurance Review is all parliamentarians' travel to, from and within Melbourne and Sydney for the period 15 October 2022 to 12 November 2022.
7. Specifically, IPEA looked at travel that coincided with the dates of SRC events in central Melbourne and Sydney.

Engagement with parliamentarians

8. Between 8 September and 12 September 2023, IPEA wrote to the 16 parliamentarians with travel that fell within the scope of this Assurance Review, requesting that they advise IPEA of the dominant purpose of their travel and the nature of any parliamentary business. IPEA also requested that they provide evidence to support their response.
9. On 30 October 2023, IPEA wrote to four parliamentarians who did not provide a response to IPEA's original request for information. IPEA received a request for an extension from two offices (Senator Pauline Hanson and Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie).
10. On 4 December 2023, IPEA wrote to one parliamentarian who did not provide a response to IPEA's two requests for information (Mr Peter Khalil MP).
11. Further correspondence with three parliamentarians was required to finalise this matter (Mr Peter Khalil MP, Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie), which is detailed within this report.
12. The final correspondence in relation to this matter was received on 9 May 2024.

Audit and Assurance function

IPEA's statutory audit function

13. IPEA audits parliamentarians' work expenses and the travel expenses of their staff under section 12 of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (IPEA Act). IPEA conducts Assurance Reviews to assess the use of public resources against the legislative framework to determine if there has been a misuse.
14. Potential outcomes of an Assurance Review include:
 - no further action in circumstances where the review has concluded the use of parliamentary business resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework, or
 - administrative remedial action, including penalty where the review has concluded there is evidence the use of parliamentary business resources was not consistent with the legislative framework, or
 - an IPEA initiated Ruling or Audit, where there is evidence of systemic or substantial misuse of parliamentary business resources, or
 - referral to the Australian Federal Police where compelling prima facie evidence of fraud or other criminal conduct is identified.

Legislative framework

15. The legislation relevant to this Assurance Review is:
 - *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act)
 - Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017 (the Regulations)
 - Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 (the Determination)

Assurance Review methodology

Background

16. The Spring Racing Carnival in Melbourne and Sydney, particularly the Melbourne Cup Carnival, are events which are considered desirable destinations for the purposes of IPEA's Audit & Assurance program.
17. In addition, a parliamentarian's travel to the Melbourne Cup Carnival attracts significant media attention that questions the use of public funds by parliamentarians to travel to such an event.
18. IPEA has conducted an Assurance Review on the use of parliamentary business resources to attend SRC events every year since 2019, except for 2020 when the event proceeded with no crowd in attendance due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

Scope of Assurance Review

19. The scope of this Assurance Review is all parliamentarians' travel to, from and within Melbourne and Sydney for the period 15 October 2022 to 12 November 2022.
20. Specifically, IPEA looked at travel that coincided with the dates of SRC events in central Melbourne and Sydney.
21. After exporting data for all parliamentarians with travel in Melbourne and Sydney for the relevant period, IPEA narrowed the data in scope by removing travel by parliamentarians that was unlikely to have been used for the purpose of attending the SRC in Sydney or Melbourne because it was:
 - Travel transitioning through Melbourne or Sydney
 - Travel for parliamentarians leaving or returning to Melbourne or Sydney
 - Travel within Sydney or Melbourne that did not coincide with SRC events.
 - Travel to locations other than SRC events.
22. 16 parliamentarians were identified as having travel that fell within the scope of this Assurance Review.

Assessment of work expenses

Summary of findings

Analysis

23. IPEA considered the legislative framework and applied the following questions to the use of expenses aligned with SRC events:
 - What was the dominant purpose of the travel?
 - What was the nature of any parliamentary business?
24. IPEA conducted the Assurance Review by examining and assessing:
 - Information held by IPEA in the Parliamentary Expenses Management System
 - the legislative framework and supporting guidelines
 - information provided by the parliamentarians.
25. Between 8 September and 12 September 2023, IPEA wrote to the 16 parliamentarians with travel that fell within the scope of this Assurance Review, requesting that they advise IPEA of the dominant purpose of their travel and the nature of any parliamentary business. IPEA also requested that they provide evidence to support their response.
26. On 30 October 2023, IPEA wrote to four parliamentarians who did not provide a response to IPEA's original request for information. IPEA received a request for an extension from two offices (Senator Pauline Hanson and Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie).
27. On 4 December 2023, IPEA wrote to one parliamentarian who did not provide a response to IPEA's two requests for information (Mr Peter Khalil MP).
28. Further correspondence with individuals is outlined below.

Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP (Correspondence – Attachment 1)

29. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Minister Chalmers.

30. On 19 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Minister Chalmers' office:

"This email is to confirm the Treasurer's travel to Sydney from 31 October to 1 November 2022 was for the dominant purpose of official duties in relation to the Federal Budget which he handed down on Tuesday 25 October 2022.

The nature of the trip was to participate in two post-Budget events which the Treasurer was invited to in his official capacity – event details attached."

31. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that the Treasurer did not attend any SRC events.

32. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Treasurer to advise that the matter was closed.

Senator the Hon Don Farrell (Correspondence – Attachment 2)

33. On 12 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Minister Farrell.

34. As no response was received, a follow up letter was sent to Minister Farrell on 31 October 2023.

35. On 9 November 2023, IPEA received a request to correct a COMCAR transaction in the travel data provided.

36. On 9 November 2023, IPEA confirmed the details of the amended COMCAR transaction.

37. On 13 November 2023, IPEA received a response from Minister Farrell:

"I, Don Farrell confirm travel between Sunday 30 October 2022 and Tuesday 1 November 2022 was undertaken for parliamentary business with the dominant purpose, official duties, including in Flemington on 1 November 2022 in my capacity as the Minister for Trade and Tourism.

On Sunday 30 October 2022 I returned from international travel, arriving at Melbourne Airport at 10:05pm.

I have included a copy of my daily program for Monday 31 October 2022 and Tuesday 1 November 2022 which includes a number of stakeholder meetings in my capacity as the Minister for Trade and Tourism."

38. IPEA accepts that as Minister for Trade and Tourism, the Minister's attendance at SRC events falls within his portfolio.

39. IPEA also accepts that the Minister had several parliamentary business engagements in Victoria during the relevant period.

40. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Minister to advise that the matter was closed.

Hon Patrick Gorman MP (Correspondence – Attachment 3)

41. On 12 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Assistant Minister Gorman.

42. On 14 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Assistant Minister Gorman:

"I refer to your correspondence dated 11 September 2023.

In response to question 1, the dominant purpose of the travel was, with reference to Attachment A, official duties.

In response to question 2, while in Melbourne I met with a family member of former Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, Tom Harley, regarding preservation of Ballam. I also met with former Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, the Hon Alan Griffin and Sam Bishop. I travelled between Sydney and Hobart where I had commitments relating to the National Australia Day Council and respective Australian of the Year awards.

I have enclosed in support of this response a copy of my diary from 2 November 2022 to 4 November 2022.

At no time in 2022 did I attend any events relating to the Spring Racing Carnival.”

- 43. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that the Assistant Minister did not attend any SRC events.
- 44. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Assistant Minister to advise that the matter was closed.

Senator Pauline Hanson (Correspondence – Attachment 4)

- 45. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Hanson.
- 46. As no response was received, a follow up letter was sent to Senator Hanson on 31 October 2023.
- 47. On 16 November 2023, IPEA received a call from one of Senator Hanson’s staff members. The staff member advised that the second correspondence from IPEA had only just been discovered and requested that the original request be resent. An extension was provided to allow the Senator time to respond to the request.

- 48. On 22 November 2023, IPEA received a response from Senator Hanson’s office:

“senator Hanson was speaking at the Australian Monarchist League conference. I found the speech and have attached it. I believe a post would also be on Facebook if needing more evidence.”

- 49. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that the Senator did not attend any SRC events.
- 50. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Senator to advise that the matter was closed.

Mr Peter Khalil MP (Correspondence – Attachment 5)

- 51. On 12 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Mr Khalil.
- 52. As no response was received, a follow up letter was sent to Mr Khalil on 31 October 2023.
- 53. As no response was received, a third letter was sent to Mr Khalil on 4 December 2023.

54. [REDACTED]

55. [REDACTED]

- 56. As no response was received, a fourth letter was sent to Mr Khalil on 9 May 2024 reminding him of his obligation to provide IPEA with compliance information as requested in relation to the use of parliamentary business resources.

- 57. On 9 May 2024, IPEA received a response from Mr Khalil’s office:

“Hi Nicole and [REDACTED]

My sincere apologies for the delay in response. I can confirm that I was not in Sydney from 11 to 16 October 2022 for the Spring Racing Carnival. Please see below for my response to the two questions at Attachment A.

- 1. *What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Sydney from 11 to 16 October 2022*

I travelled from Melbourne to Sydney on 11 October 2022 solely to catch an international flight from Sydney to Honolulu.

I travelled from Sydney to Melbourne on 16 October 2022 solely to catch a flight after my international flight from Honolulu to Sydney.

The reason I was in Honolulu was for the Australian American Leadership Dialogue (AALD). Please see below for explanation of this being within dominant purpose of parliamentary business.

- 2. With reference to the Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 (Attachment B) what as the nature of any parliamentary business in Sydney between 11 and 16 October 2022? Please provide copies of documentation to support your response, such as diary notes, invitations or media reporting.*

The nature of trip in Honolulu (which was the reason for my flights to and from Sydney) was for the dominant purpose of parliamentary business. I was asked to attend AALD as I have been Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) since September 2022 and a PJCIS Committee member since October 2021. The AALD conference events and meetings were on cyber-security and our regional security. This is part of my work on PJCIS and the Indo-Pacific.

I have attached a photo my diary during that week with the events in Honolulu. As you can see, my flight to Sydney was directly before my international flight to Honolulu, and my flight to Melbourne was directly after my flight from Honolulu.

Please let me know if there is anything further I can provide.”

58. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that Mr Khalil did not attend any SRC events.
59. On 15 May 2024, IPEA wrote to Mr Khalil to advise that the matter was closed.

Hon David Littleproud MP (Correspondence – Attachment 6)

60. On 12 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Mr Littleproud.
61. On 29 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Mr Littleproud’s office:

“I am writing on behalf of the Hon. David Littleproud MP in response to your letter dated 11 September 2023 seeking assurance in relation to travel conducted on the 30 October-4 November (outlined in Attachment B).

As requested, the responses to the questions in Attachment B are as follows:

- 1. The intended purpose was to attend in an official capacity as an office holder, the Australian Hotels Association National Board luncheon on Monday 31 October 2022 in Melbourne.*
- 2. The intended nature of parliamentary business on Sunday 30 October 2022 was arriving that night in Melbourne in preparation to attend an event in his official capacity the following day.*
- 3. Following a late change (explained in question 5 below), the travel to Sydney on the 31 October 2022 was to join other National Party Members and Senators in attending the funeral of Party Trustee, author and esteemed political figure, Mr Paul Davey AM at Camellia Chapel in Macquarie Park Crematorium, Sydney.*
- 4. The dominant purpose of David’s travel was both of parliamentary and official duties as an office holder and Shadow Minister for Agriculture.*
- 5. The parliamentary duties and official business undertaken in Victoria between 31 October and 4th November, included:*

- *October 31 – Mr Littleproud was invited to attend the Australian Hotels Association National Board luncheon in Melbourne in his capacity as an office holder and it was the intention to attend this event. However, with the funeral of Mr Paul Davey AM being scheduled at the same time meant that a late change was made to fly directly from Melbourne to Sydney return that day to attend the funeral (see attached diary notes).*
- *November 1 - attending an on-site, early morning live-to-air media segment at Flemington with [REDACTED] on 2GB, which required COMCAR return transport and an in-studio Sky News segment at the Southbank studios, which also required COMCAR transport. Both of these were in the morning prior to 10am. Mr Littleproud was invited to attend the Melbourne Cup in his capacity as an office holder and attended the event later that day.*
- *November 2 – attended a mixture of meetings, roundtables and site tours in Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley with regional stakeholders and employers in energy, manufacturing and primary production, as well as holding a media conference in Moe (see attached diary notes & media clippings).*
- *November 3 – visited and met with flood impacted businesses, farmers, community groups and individuals across flood affected northern Victoria alongside the Member for Nicholls, which included two media conferences (see attached diary notes & media clippings).*
- *November 4 – returned to the electorate and home base.*

The following attachments have been provided to support Mr Littleproud’s travel:

- *AHA National Board Luncheon confirmation*
- *Diary notes on day sheets for the period 31/10 – 3/10.*
- *Relevant media clippings.”*

62. IPEA accepts that as Leader of the Nationals and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Mr Littleproud’s attendance at SRC events falls within his portfolio.
63. IPEA also accepts that Mr Littleproud had several parliamentary business engagements in Victoria during the relevant period.
64. On 14 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Mr Littleproud to advise that the matter was closed.

Hon Kristy McBain MP (Correspondence – Attachment 7)

65. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Minister McBain.
66. On 15 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Minister McBain’s office:

“In response to the questions in Attachment B the Minister travelled to Melbourne between 12 and 14 October in an official capacity for the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Conference and other stakeholder meetings. While there she gave a presentation to conference delegates, met with Regional Cities Victoria, the Rural City of Wangaratta, the Mount Alexander Shire Council CEO, the Baw Baw Shire Council, East Gippsland Shire Council and attended the Conference Gala Dinner.

The Minister departed Melbourne for Sydney on 15 October on Party Political business to attend the NSW Labor Conference which was held on both the 15th and 16th October (diary entries attached).

Minister McBain did not attend any Spring Racing Carnival events.”

67. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that the Minister did not attend any SRC events.
68. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Minister to advise that the matter was closed.

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie (Correspondence – Attachment 8)

69. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator McKenzie.
70. As no response was received, a follow up letter was sent to Senator McKenzie on 31 October 2023.
71. On 8 November 2023, IPEA received a call from one of Senator McKenzie’s staff members. The staff member advised that they were having difficulty determining the Senator’s movements for the requested period. An extension was provided to allow the Senator time to locate information pertaining to her travel and respond to the request.
72. On 15 December 2023, IPEA received a response from Senator McKenzie’s office:
- “In response to the questions to the above Assurance Review, Senator McKenzie was undertaking parliamentary, and official duties during the three days in question.*
- Background: please see diary notes, invitation, newspaper articles and photos attached for media appearances in Sydney (October 31), Melbourne (November 1), Shepparton and Hobart (November 2) confirm this.*
- Senator McKenzie attended a funeral in her capacity as Nationals Senate leader, held other meetings, and conducted an interview on Sky, travelled from Sydney to Melbourne on October 31; was a guest of Tabcorp at the Melbourne Cup (November 1), travelled on to Shepparton for stakeholder meetings on the Shepparton by-pass and met with local media,; and then to Hobart to attend the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Congress Dinner (November 2) where she gave an address in her capacity as Opposition Regional Development Minister.*
- Media reports in the AFR, The Australian, Win News, Shepparton News, and the Sea Lake & Whycheproof Times Ensign and Sky and ABC confirm the above.*
- A snapshot of the diary from this period is also provided.”*
73. On 9 February 2024, IPEA wrote to Senator McKenzie again, requesting that she respond to IPEA’s questions.
74. On 15 February 2024, IPEA received a response from Senator McKenzie’s office:
- “Thank you for bringing this to our attention.*
- As per previous correspondence on December 15, the dominant purpose for the Senator McKenzie was official parliamentary business.*
- After reviewing our records, Senator McKenzie did not submit travel claim for October 31. One will now be submitted.”*
75. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Senator McKenzie, reminding her of her obligation to provide IPEA with compliance information as requested in relation to her use of parliamentary business resources. IPEA sent three questions for the Senator’s response.
76. On 18 March 2024, IPEA received a call from one of Senator McKenzie’s staff members. The staff member questioned what additional information was required to finalise the matter. IPEA advised that further details about the Senator’s parliamentary business in Melbourne for the relevant period were needed, and to refer to the Determination when responding.
77. On 25 March 2024, IPEA received a call from one of Senator McKenzie’s staff members. The staff member apologised for the delay in responding to the correspondence and an extension was granted.
78. On 28 March 2024, IPEA received a response from Senator McKenzie:

“Further to previous correspondence with my office in relation to an IPEA Assurance Review into transportation costs on Monday October 30, 2022, I am providing the following explanation.

As outlined previously by my office, I travelled from Sydney to Melbourne on October 30, 2022, to enable me to attend a Melbourne Cup function the following day, for which supporting documentation has been provided. I used a COMCAR to travel from Melbourne Airport to my hotel in Melbourne (noting that my home base is Wodonga). I did not use a COMCAR to travel to and from the event.

You have requested that I am to specify "the nature" of parliamentary business under Regulation 98 of the Parliamentary Resources Regulations, 2017 and how my attendance at the event constitutes parliamentary business.

I was invited to the event by a racing industry stakeholder, Tabcorp.

The sole reason I was invited to attend the function was in my capacity as Senator for Victoria and the Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. The sole reason I agreed to attend was because of my capacity as Senator for Victoria.

The Melbourne Cup is the showcase annual event of this important and valuable industry, which I support, engage with, and which is also a major stakeholder.

The Victorian racing industry is an important contributor to the state that I represent, generating \$3.2 billion expenditure into the state's economy, and directly employing 34,900 people, according to a report commissioned by Racing Victoria.

According to the 2022 IER Pty Ltd report, entitled "Size and Scope of the Victorian Racing Industry", there were also 1,458 breeders, 956 trainers, 71,388 owners, and 4,741 volunteers in the thoroughbred industry alone in Victoria the year surveyed (more are employed in other codes such as harness and greyhounds). This estimate does not include the employees of racing clubs (6,660), employees of wagering businesses (2,746), and other participants including volunteers in the industry (5,275).

This stakeholder is particularly vital for regional Victoria, evidence for which is outlined on page 22 of the report that can be found with this link. The racing industry helps underpin the economies of many regional centres.

Thank you for your interest in this matter and I trust that this explanation provides IPEA with the assurance it is seeking.

79. IPEA accepts that as Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Senator for Victoria, the Senator's attendance at SRC events falls within her portfolio.
80. IPEA also accepts that the Senator had several parliamentary business engagements in Victoria during the relevant period.
81. On 9 May 2024, IPEA wrote to the Senator to advise that the matter was closed.

Hon Brendan O'Connor MP (Correspondence – Attachment 9)

82. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Minister O'Connor.
83. On 22 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Minister O'Connor's office:

“The purpose of this travel was undertaken pursuant to Schedule 4 of the PBR Determination – Official duties – b) Attending an event to which the member has been invited in their official capacity.”

84. On 9 February 2024, IPEA wrote to Minister O'Connor requesting additional information on how attendance at the Melbourne Cup constituted parliamentary business.
85. On 26 February 2024, a staff member from Minister O'Connor's office wrote to advise that the Minister had missed the deadline due to his attendance at the OECD conference in Europe and requesting an extension until 1 March 2024.
86. On 27 February 2024, IPEA received a response from Minister O'Connor's office:
- "Please be advised in response to your email dated February 9, 2024, I re-affirm travel on November 1, 2022, to be consistent with Schedule 4 of the PBR Determination – Official duties.*
- In order to acquit the outstanding matter in a timely and effective way and due to the time being expended on the exchange with IPEA on this matter, the Minister has decided to reimburse the expense (cab charge \$60.63)."*
87. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Minister O'Connor reminding him of his obligation to provide IPEA with compliance information as requested in relation to his use of parliamentary business resources. IPEA advised that if he did not engage with the assurance process, he would be invoiced with a penalty loading of 25% in line with section.
88. On 22 March 2024, IPEA received a response from Minister O'Connor's office:
- "I offer the following further details.*
- The Minister was invited in his official capacity as a Federal Government Minister by Lion Nathan. The Minister met with its most senior people on the day and discussed skills and training policy and Parliamentary matters. Those in attendance from Lion Nathan included;*
- ██████████ *Global CEO*
- ██████████ *Australian Managing Director*
- ██████████ *Director Government and Industry Relations (met the Minister on arrival)*
- In addition, the Minister met ██████████, Corporate Affairs Director, Endeavour Group, and its CEO ██████████.*
- These company representatives sought discussions with the Minister about skills shortages and supply chain issues facing their industry and the industries that their businesses rely upon, and sought to raise awareness of challenges with Minister O'Connor as the relevant Federal Government Minister and to engage with him on Parliamentary and policy responses relevant to their companies. The Minister would not have been invited otherwise.*
- As meeting notes were not kept, the above has been confirmed with a Lion Nathan representative present on the day.*
- I'm able to confirm that there are no reasons other than to reduce strain on resources and to save time that the Minister has offered to repay the cab charge fare."*
89. On 26 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Minister O'Connor's office as the previous response indicated that he still wished to repay the Cabcharge expense. IPEA consulted the Minister in relation to the penalty loading that should apply, in line with its obligations under section 39 of the PBR Act. The correspondence sought any further information he wished to provide in consideration of the penalty loading, up to 25%, that should be applied in this instance.
90. On 28 March 2024, IPEA received a response from Minister O'Connor's office:

“As you know the Minister wishes to resolve this matter asap for expedience and to re-pay for the original cab fare. Please explain how the Minister can make payment and it will be arranged asap.

Whilst the office understands the diligence required in these matters, with respect to the new matter raised, the proposal to apply a 25% loading for not making payment or reimbursement of the cab fare within 28 days, we cannot see that it is fair in the circumstances. As far as the Minister knew, in the 28 days post the use of a cab, there were no issues, a cab was utilised by the Minister as part of his official duties, and there was no invoice or repayment mechanism.

I re-affirm the willingness of the Minister to make reimbursement of the cab fare and he will do so quickly.

If you decide to apply a 25% late loading, the Minister will pay this also, even though in the circumstances a late fee does not seem warranted.

Please advise how and where the Minister can make this payment (is an invoice to be sent or what does the Minister need to do?).

Again, we appreciate your diligence and work and hope this matter can now be resolved in a manner you consider appropriate.”

91. An invoice for the Cabcharge transaction, including a 25% penalty loading, was raised in accordance with section 39 of the PBR Act and sent to the Minister on 12 April 2024.
92. The invoice, totalling \$87.53, has been repaid in full.
93. On 9 May 2024, IPEA wrote to the Minister to advise that the matter was closed.

Senator James Paterson (Correspondence – Attachment 10)

94. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Paterson.
95. On 8 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Senator Paterson’s office:

“Between 11 and 16 October I was in Honolulu, Hawaii, to participate in the Australian American Leadership Dialogue.

I was invited in my capacity as the then Shadow Minister for Cyber Security and Countering Foreign Interference. I represented the Opposition at the Dialogue, while the Government was represented by Peter Khalil MP. I have attached the full program from the Dialogue.

My participation in the Dialogue constitutes Parliamentary Business under c, e and f of schedule 1 of the 2017 determination.

During the Dialogue I met with a number of stakeholders in my portfolio both from the United States and Australia. I have attached the delegate handbook from the Dialogue which outlines my participation and the participation of many delegates who are directly relevant to my portfolio, but some include the Director General of the Australian Signals Directorate [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] from the US Cyber Command.

I was also a guest speaker on a number of panels relating to my portfolio. I have attached the written invitation for one of those as an example.

My international travel out of Sydney was sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines (which was disclosed in the appropriate way on my register of interests). I have attached my e-ticket receipts for those flights. I used parliamentary expenses to get to and from Sydney from my home base of Melbourne.

My attendance at the Dialogue was reported in The Australian [here](#) and posted on Twitter [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

I did not use any work expenses to attend any Spring Racing Carnival events.”

96. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that the Senator did not attend any SRC events.
97. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Senator to advise that the matter was closed.

Mr Dan Repacholi MP (Correspondence – Attachment 11)

98. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Mr Repacholi.
99. On 13 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Mr Repacholi:

“Thank you for your letter regarding the Assurance Review of travel and travel-related expenses.

On 29 October I travelled to Victoria to attend the Melton Pistol Club 50th Anniversary Celebrations.

I received the attached invitation to attend the Club to be the guest speaker on the night in my capacity as the Federal Member for Hunter, Co-Convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of Shooting and as a former Olympian and Commonwealth Games gold medallist and as a former member of the Club.

I was unsure if I was able to travel to the event as an MP, so my office sought advice from IPEA, see attached. It was determined these were official parliamentary duties as an MP.

This was the only event that I attended while in Victoria and I didn’t attend the Spring Racing Carnival 2022.

Following the event on the Saturday night, I joined some old friends from the Club and had a few beers at the local pub.

On the Sunday morning I had breakfast with some friends and lunch with my family who attended the Melton Pistol Club 50th Anniversary Celebrations as well.

I returned to the airport and flew back home.”

100. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that Mr Repacholi did not attend any SRC events.
101. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Mr Repacholi to advise that the matter was closed.

Hon Stuart Robert (Correspondence – Attachment 12)

102. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Mr Robert.
103. On 8 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Mr Robert:

“Thanks for your email,

I no longer have access to my APH diary so I can only rely on my personal diary. Please note that I did not attend any Spring Racing Carnival or any public event / fund raiser or the like.

On Friday 4th I flew to Sydney:

- met with [REDACTED] - the CEO of the Paul Ramsay Foundation to discuss their taxation strategy, not for profit status, how they are partnering and what the tax law on charitable trusts means for their ongoing management.

- met with bridging finance lenders on the proposed changes to responsible lending (impending Levy report)

- met with Alspec on their challenges with the Alspec Business Park development in Western Sydney and the tax implications of their approach.

I also thought I was with one of the Industry Super Fund CEOs discussing unlisted assets and quarterly valuations, notably repricing of their Canva assets. However without my APH diary I cannot confirm that.”

104. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that Mr Robert did not attend any SRC events.

105. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Mr Robert to advise that the matter was closed.

Senator the Hon Anne Ruston (Correspondence – Attachment 13)

106. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Ruston.

107. On 22 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Senator Ruston:

“I write responding to questions raised from the Assurance Review on the Spring Racing Carnival 2022 outlined in Attachment B.

Question 1

The dominant purpose of my travel to Melbourne on 22 October 2022 was Official duties.

Question 2

With reference to the Parliamentary Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 I attended an event in my official capacity as Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care and Shadow Minister for Sport and I attach the invitation as requested. Please note there was no overnight stay in Melbourne.

Question 3

The dominant purpose of my travel to Melbourne between 31 October 2022 and 2 November 2022 was Official duties.

Question 4

With reference to the Parliamentary Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 I attended an event in my official capacity as Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care and Shadow Minister for Sport and I attach the invitation as requested.”

108. IPEA accepts that as Shadow Minister for Sport, the Senator’s attendance at SRC events falls within her portfolio.

109. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Senator to advise that the matter was closed.

Ms Susan Templeman MP (Correspondence – Attachment 14)

110. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Ms Templeman.

111. On 11 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Ms Templeman:

“Thanks you for your letter dated 7 September concerning my travel on 29 October 2022.

In answer to your questions:

The dominant purpose of my travel was Parliamentary Business.

I was representing the Minister for Communications and presenting awards at the Australian Commercial Radio Awards. See attached.”

112. Based on the information available, IPEA accepts that Ms Templeman did not attend any SRC events.

113. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to Ms Templeman to advise that the matter was closed.

Senator Tammy Tyrrell (Correspondence – Attachment 15)

114. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Tyrrell.
115. On 14 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Senator Tyrrell:

“I would like to lodge my response in regard to the Spring Racing Carnival Audit.

I was invited by the Australian Hoteliers Association National Board Luncheon (Details listed below) event on the 31st of October in Melbourne where I utilised a Virgin flight (on the 30th Oct) and a COMCAR from the airport to get to my accommodation plus a couple of cab charge fairs to have a meeting with a local member in Melbourne on Sunday the 31st Oct.

I only requested one night of accommodation for the 30th Oct as the Monday event was for parliamentary duties and covered the cost of the 31st of October and 1st November accommodation personally.

On Monday the 31st I went into the city and utilised my cab charge for a breakfast meeting these fairs were to get to and from the venue and to return to the hotelier’s event where networking and industry conversations with the hoteliers in regards to their industry nationally and locally in Tasmania where I was invited as a member of Parliament.

I was also invited to Melbourne Cup with LION but chose not to claim accommodation for 2 nights as I took my partner and we enjoyed the day out technically I was invited in my capacity as Senator for Tasmania which would be covered by Parliamentary duties but I also had a lovely day with my partner and chose to cover these expenses myself, in saying that I did utilise my Cabcharge to get to the shared transport to Melbourne Cup and to return to my accommodation after the day.

The Comcar charge on the 2 November was to catch a flight home to Tasmania so I could attend meetings in my Electorate.”

116. On 9 February 2024, IPEA wrote to Senator Tyrrell requesting additional information in relation to the use of Cabcharge to travel to and from the Melbourne Cup.
117. On 15 February 2024, Senator Tyrrell spoke with a team member from IPEA’s Audit & Assurance section. In this conversation, she requested an invoice to repay the Cabcharge transactions, advising that although she was invited to the Melbourne Cup in her capacity as Senator for Tasmania, she and her husband had attended together and “had a nice day”.
118. An invoice for the Cabcharge transactions, including a 25% penalty loading, was raised in accordance with section 38 of the PBR Act.
119. The invoice, totalling \$64.66, has been repaid in full.

Hon Anika Wells MP (Correspondence – Attachment 16)

120. On 8 September 2023, IPEA wrote to Minister Wells.
121. On 26 September 2023, IPEA received a response from Minister Wells:

“In answer to the query in the attached letter:

- 1. Dominant purpose of travel on those dates was Official Duties as Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Sport*
 - a) Invited as Minister for Sport to attend 2023 Melbourne Cup Day*
 - b) Invited as Minister for Aged Care to address The Australian & Melbourne Institute Conference*
- 2. Invitations with details attached.”*

122. IPEA accepts that as Minister for Sport, the Minister's attendance at SRC events falls within her portfolio.
123. IPEA also accepts that the Minister had several parliamentary business engagements in Victoria during the relevant period.
124. On 15 March 2024, IPEA wrote to the Minister to advise that the matter was closed.

Conclusion

125. Of the 16 parliamentarians contacted in relation to this Assurance Review:
 - two parliamentarians elected to repay associated expenses; and
 - 14 parliamentarians' travel did not require further investigation.
126. After analysis of the information available to IPEA, including the responses provided, IPEA is satisfied that the travel-related resources used for travel to, from and within Sydney and Melbourne during the Spring Racing Carnival 2022 do not require further consideration by IPEA.