

Question on Notice
No. 861
Asked on 18 August 2004

Mr Hopper asked the Premier and Minister for Trade (Mr Beattie)—

QUESTION:

For each of the last three financial years will he detail all occasions that departmental representatives, including Trade Commissioners, have incurred the costs of the Premier and any of the Premier's staff (itemised separately) as well as the cost incurred on each occasion in Australian dollars?

ANSWER:

Generally, all costs incurred by the Premier and his staff during official overseas visits are met by the Premier's Office. A review of departmental records for the last three financial years has identified the following exceptions. The costs for these cases were not sent to my office for reimbursement purposes.

Bills for a total of \$346.77 should have been sent to my office. They were not. As soon as I was made aware of the fact, I directed that a bill for that amount should be sent to my office, It was and it has now been paid.

The review revealed that during my Trade Mission to the United States and Mexico between 22 and 29 June 2001, the Honourable Bob Gibbs, Trade Commissioner to the Americas, hosted lunch in Mexico for representatives of Accenture, Channel 7, the Queensland Government Trade and Investment Office for the Americas and a staff member of the Premier's Office, at a total cost of AUD\$189.43.

During my Trade Mission to China, Korea and Japan between 10 and 18 November 2001, Mr Scott Shepherd, former Trade Commissioner to China, hosted dinner in Shanghai for the me, Mrs Heather Beattie, a staff member of the Premier's Office and two departmental representatives at a total cost of AUD\$492.65.

During my Trade Mission to Israel, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Europe between 22 March and 3 April 2004, a Department of State Development and Innovation representative accompanied Mrs Beattie to a meeting at Southampton University to discuss the establishment and key objectives behind the new Healthcare Education Innovation Unit at a total cost of AUD\$44.26.

The search has also revealed that a former Leader of the Opposition received hospitality from the Queensland Agent-General in London during a visit in June 2002.

Mr John Dawson and Mr Mike Horan met to discuss the then Leader of the Opposition's visit program, incurring costs of AUD\$400.81. A further meeting was held involving Mr Dawson, Mr Horan and representatives of HOK, 3i and Sport England to discuss opportunities for Queensland in the sport and biotech industries, incurring costs of AUD\$331.70.

As soon as this expenditure involving my office was drawn to my attention I instructed that my office should be billed for the proportion of the lunch bill in Mexico in 2001 attributable to a member of my staff; the proportion of the dinner bill in Shanghai in 2001 attributable to Mrs Heather Beattie, a staff member of my office and me; and the proportion of the expenses attributable to Mrs Heather Beattie during the visit to Southampton University in 2004.

The Ministerial Offices and Parliamentary Support Unit in my department did so and issued my office with a bill for \$346.77. This bill was paid.

While this may appear to be only a book entry to some, it is very important to have this separation.

Systems have now been put in place to ensure this does not happen again.

I would urge the present Opposition Leader to make similar arrangements to repay Mr Horan's share of the \$732.51 bill that was paid for by the Agent-General in London.