



Australian Government
**Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority**

Assurance Review 2025/023

Ms Meryl Swanson MP - family reunion travel

1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023

Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

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Ms Meryl Swanson MP - family reunion travel

Executive summary

1. The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) conducted an assurance review of Ms Meryl Swanson MP's use of work resources for family reunion purposes (family reunion travel resources) for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023 (the period in scope).

Scope

2. The scope of this assurance review is family reunion travel by Ms Meryl Swanson MP and her family between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.
3. The purpose of the assurance review was to determine whether the family reunion travel resources were used in accordance with the legislative framework.

Reason for review

4. As part of IPEA's review of parliamentarians' use of family reunion travel resources, IPEA undertook a preliminary assessment into family reunion travel by Ms Meryl Swanson MP and her family members during the period 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023. After excluding family travel to and from Canberra, the preliminary assessment found that family reunion travel resources had been for travel to Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast from 30 to 31 October 2022, and for travel to Brisbane and the Gold Coast from 14 to 15 January 2023.
5. On 4 February 2025, IPEA commenced an assurance review of Ms Swanson's family reunion travel.

Outcome*

6. IPEA found that:
 - a. The use of family reunion travel resources to travel to Queensland on 14 January 2023 and return to Newcastle on 15 January 2023 was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.
 - b. The use of family reunion travel resources to travel to Melbourne on 30 October 2022 was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.
 - c. The use of family reunion travel resources to travel to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022 was not consistent with the legislative framework and was in contravention of section 26 of the PBR Act.
7. Ms Swanson was invoiced a total of \$1,016.58 to recover the cost of airfares for herself and her spouse for the specified travel, including a 25% penalty loading under Section 38 of the PBR Act.

*Potential outcomes

There are three potential outcomes of an assurance review:

1. Consistent with the rules

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource complied with the law.

This means the available evidence, including information provided by the member, clearly shows that all obligations under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* were met.

2. Not inconsistent with the rules

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource was not shown to be against the law.

This means IPEA has accepted the member's explanation that they met their obligations under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*, and IPEA has not found any evidence to the contrary.

3. Not consistent with the rules

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource did not comply with the law.

This means there has been a misuse of a parliamentary work resource under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*. Where misuse is found, the value of the resource will be recovered, including any applicable penalty.

IPEA's statutory audit function

8. IPEA audits parliamentarians' use of parliamentary business work resources and the use of travel resources by their staff under section 12 of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017*. IPEA conducts assurance reviews to assess the use of resources against the legislative framework to determine if there has been misuse.

Legislative framework

9. Section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act) provides the following meaning of **parliamentary business**:

The parliamentary business of a member means any of the following:

- (a) the **parliamentary duties** of a member, being activities of the member that:
 - i. relate directly to the member's role as a member; and
 - ii. are determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(a);
- (b) the **electorate duties** of the member, being activities of the member that:
 - i. support or serve the member's constituents; and
 - ii. are determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(b);
- (c) the **party political duties** of the member, being activities determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(c);
- (d) for a member who is an office holder or a Minister of State – the **official duties** of the member being activities that:
 - i. relate to the member's role as an office holder or Minister of State; and
 - ii. are determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(d).

10. Subsection 6(4) of the PBR Act provides that the Minister must determine activities of a member that are parliamentary duties of the member, or electorate duties of the member, or party political duties of the member, or official duties of the member. The Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 (the Determination) determines the activities which fall within the four duty streams set out in section 6 of the PBR Act.

11. Section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017 (PBR Regulations) provides the meaning of **family reunion purposes** as:

A family member of a member travels for **family reunion purposes** if:

- (a) the member is travelling within Australia for the dominant purpose of conducting the member's parliamentary business; and
- (b) the family member travels to accompany or join the member; and
- (c) the travel by the family member is for the dominant purpose of facilitating the family life of the member's family.

12. Section 4 of the PBR Regulations provides the following meaning of **family member**:

- (a) the member's spouse or nominee;
- (b) a dependent child of the member;
- (c) a designated person in relation to the member.

Review process

13. Ms Swanson and her spouse undertook two trips using parliamentary work resources for which IPEA required additional information to assess whether their use of family reunion travel was consistent with the legislative framework.

Melbourne and Sunshine Coast travel

14. Ms Swanson and her spouse flew from Newcastle to Melbourne on 30 October 2022. Parliamentary work resources were used for flights only.
15. Ms Swanson and her spouse then flew from Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022 using parliamentary work resources.

Brisbane and Gold Coast travel

16. Ms Swanson and her spouse flew from Newcastle to Brisbane on 14 January 2023. Parliamentary work resources were used for flights and ground transport.
17. Ms Swanson then flew from the Gold Coast to Newcastle on 15 January 2023 using parliamentary work resources for her flight and ground transport.
18. IPEA corresponded with Ms Swanson on several occasions (**Attachments 1 to 8**). Ms Swanson was asked about the dominant purpose of her travel and the nature of her parliamentary business with reference to the Determination. Ms Swanson was also asked to advise whether her family member's travel met the three-part test in Section 6 of the PBR Regulations.
19. Ms Swanson advised IPEA that she travelled to Melbourne in October 2022 to attend the AHA National Board Luncheon as the Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture, prior to travelling to the Sunshine Coast for a personal engagement.
20. Ms Swanson further advised IPEA that she travelled to Queensland in January 2023 to attend the Magic Millions VIP marquee in her capacity as Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Primary Producers.
21. Ms Swanson provided copies of invitations in support of her responses.
22. As Ms Swanson and her husband were travelling to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022 for personal reasons rather than parliamentary business, the travel contravened section 26(1) of the PBR Act.
23. Section 26(1) of the PBR Act provides that a member must not claim expenses, an allowance or any other public resources unless the expenses are incurred, or the allowance or resources are claimed, for the dominant purpose of conducting the member's parliamentary business.
24. Section 38(4) provides that the member is liable to pay the Commonwealth, by way of penalty for the contravention of section 26, 27 or 28, an amount equal to 25% of the amount to which this section applies.
25. Consequently, IPEA raised an invoice to recover \$1,016.58, comprised of the cost of airfares for Ms Swanson and her spouse from Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022 and a 25% penalty loading.

Conclusion

26. Based on IPEA's records, publicly available information and the information provided by Ms Swanson, IPEA found that:
- a. The use of family reunion travel resources to travel to Queensland on 14 January 2023 and return to Newcastle on 15 January 2023 was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.
 - b. The use of family reunion travel resources to travel to Melbourne on 30 October 2022 was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.
 - c. The use of family reunion travel resources to travel to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022 was not consistent with the legislative framework and was in contravention of sections 26 and 28 of the PBR Act.
27. Ms Swanson was invoiced a total of \$1,016.58 to recover the cost of airfares for herself and her spouse for the specified travel, including a 25% penalty loading under Section 38 of the PBR Act. The invoice has been repaid in full.

From: Assurance
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)'
Cc: Assurance
Subject: HPE CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Attachment A - Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination.pdf; Attachment B - Ms Meryl Swanson MP Travel Data.pdf; Letter - IPEA to Ms Meryl Swanson MP - 5 February 2025.pdf

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

5 February 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson
PO Box 156
Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) has responsibility under the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* to undertake assurance activities in relation to the work expenses of members of parliament.

Please note that IPEA publishes completed assurance reviews on the website at www.ipea.gov.au/assurance-audit/published-assurance-reviews.

IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023.

Legislative framework

The use of travel expenses for family reunion must meet the three-part test below, set out in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:

*A family member of a member travels for **family reunion purposes** if:*

- (a) the member is travelling within Australia for the dominant purpose of conducting the member's parliamentary business; and*
- (b) the family member travels to accompany or join the member; and*
- (c) the travel by the family member is for the dominant purpose of facilitating the family life of the member's family.*

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act) and the Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 (the Determination – **Attachment A**) define the four streams of parliamentary business. These are parliamentary duties, electorate duties, party political duties and official duties.

The principles parliamentarians are to apply when utilising public resources are set out in part 3 - division 2 of the PBR Act.

Action Required

Attachment B details your Commonwealth-funded family reunion travel within the period that is relevant to this Assurance Review, and we have set out questions for your response. Where we have asked about the nature of your parliamentary business, please reference the definition of Parliamentary Business as outlined in the Determination and provide copies of documentation to support your response, such as diary notes, invitations or media reporting.

Please provide a written response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **28 February 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
A/g Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017

I, Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, make the following determination.

Dated 14 December 2017

Mathias Cormann
Minister for Finance

Contents

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1 Name

This instrument is the *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences at the same time as the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

4 Interpretation

(1) In this instrument:

Act means the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

Note: A number of expressions used in this instrument are defined in the definitions section of the Act, including the following:

- (a) *constituent*;
- (b) *member*;
- (c) *office holder*, and
- (d) *vice regal function*.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, an activity specified in a Schedule to this determination is specified whether it takes place within Australia or overseas.

5 Parliamentary business of members

- (1) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(a) of the Act, the *parliamentary duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 1 for that member.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(b) of the Act, the *electorate duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 2 for that member.
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(c) of the Act, the *party political duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 3 for that member.
- (4) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(d) of the Act, the *official duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 4 for that member.

Schedule 1—Parliamentary duties

(Act s 6(4)(a))

Column 1 Member (or class)	Column 2 Parliamentary duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	<p>In the member's capacity as a member of the Parliament:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Preparing for, participating in and attending to business arising from proceedings of the Parliament, whether by committee of the whole or otherwise;b) Developing, reviewing or amending legislation or proposed legislation, and activities engaged in for that purpose;c) Undertaking research, communication (including with stakeholders) or administration connected with the business of the Parliament, the member's policy portfolio, or their role as a member;d) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from an official government, parliamentary or vice regal meeting, event or function;e) Preparing for, participating in and attending to matters arising from a meeting (including with stakeholders), event or function for the purposes of their role as a member, including in relation to the member's policy portfolio;f) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to business arising from a non-Parliamentary committee, taskforce or other formal group in which the member participates;g) Representing the Parliament, in accordance with an approval of the Parliament or a House of the Parliament, and engaging in associated activities for that purpose;h) Representing a Minister or office holder in their official capacity, at the request of that Minister or office holder, at a meeting, event or function;i) Representing the Government or Australia, with the approval of the Prime Minister. <p><i>Note: For Ministers representing the Government or Australia in their capacity as a Minister, this would be part of the member's official duties (see Schedule 4).</i></p>

Schedule 2—Electorate duties

(Act s 6(4)(b))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Electorate duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In the member's capacity as their constituent's elected representative: a) Facilitating and participating in debate, discussion, a meeting, event or function, or undertaking research or administrative functions relating to matters of importance or interest to constituents (including matters that do not relate exclusively to constituents, such as matters of national importance); b) Otherwise communicating with constituents; c) Representing the views and interests of constituents.

Schedule 3—Party political duties

(Act s 6(4)(c))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Party political duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In respect of the political party to which the member belongs, participating in any of the following in their capacity as an elected Senator or member of the House of Representatives: a) a formal meeting of the political party (including a meeting of the party executive, a committee or a subcommittee); b) a national, state or territory conference.

Schedule 4—Official duties

(Act s 6(4)(d))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Official duties
All office holders and Ministers of State	In the member's official capacity (being their capacity as a Minister or office holder, as the case may be): <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Exercising the powers or functions, or performing the duties, of the member's office, or activities engaged in for the purposes of doing so;b) Attending an event to which the member has been invited in their official capacity;c) Other activities directly related to, and engaged in for the purposes of, performing the member's official role.

Attachment B

Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Work Expense	Traveller	Departure Location	Departure Date	Departure Time	Arrival Location	Arrival Date	Arrival Time	Total Amount
Airfare – Virgin Australia Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Newcastle	30/10/2022	02:40 PM	Melbourne	30/10/2022	04:15 PM	\$513.21
Airfare – Virgin Australia Spouse	[REDACTED]	Newcastle	30/10/2022	02:40 PM	Melbourne	30/10/2022	04:15 PM	\$513.21
Airfare – Jetstar Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Melbourne	31/10/2022	06:35 PM	Sunshine Coast	31/10/2022	07:45 PM	\$406.63
Airfare – Jetstar Spouse	[REDACTED]	Melbourne	31/10/2022	06:35 PM	Sunshine Coast	31/10/2022	07:45 PM	\$406.63

1. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
2. With reference to the Determination at **Attachment A**, what was the nature of your parliamentary business in Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
3. Please advise whether your spouse’s travel expenses meet the three-part test in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:
 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
 - b. Your family member was travelling to accompany or join you; and
 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

Attachment B

Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Work Expense		Departure Location	Departure Date	Departure Time	Arrival Location	Arrival Date	Arrival Time	Total Amount
COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Buchanan	14/01/2023	08:30 AM	Williamtown	14/01/2023	09:14 AM	\$148.50
Airfare – QANTAS Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Newcastle	14/01/2023	10:10 AM	Brisbane	14/01/2023	10:20 AM	\$609.30
Airfare – QANTAS Spouse		Newcastle	14/01/2023	10:10 AM	Brisbane	14/01/2023	10:20 AM	\$609.30
COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Brisbane A/P	14/01/2023	10:05 AM	Bundall	14/01/2023	01:13 PM	\$544.71
COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Broadbeach	15/01/2023	03:30 PM	Bilinga	15/01/2023	04:15 PM	\$77.50
Airfare – Jetstar Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Gold Coast	15/01/2023	05:35 PM	Newcastle	15/01/2023	07:45 PM	\$1,212.00
COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Williamtown	15/01/2023	07:45 PM	Buchanan	15/01/2023	08:15 PM	\$178.20

4. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
5. With reference to the Determination at **Attachment A**, what was the nature of your parliamentary business in Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
6. Please advise whether your spouse’s travel expenses meet the three-part test in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:
 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
 - b. Your family member was travelling to accompany or join you; and
 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 February 2025 3:57 PM
To: Assurance
Cc: Swanson, Meryl (MP)
Subject: RE: HPE CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

I write to you in reference to the above travel. I was the office manager at the time of this travel and spoke with IPEA seeking advice.

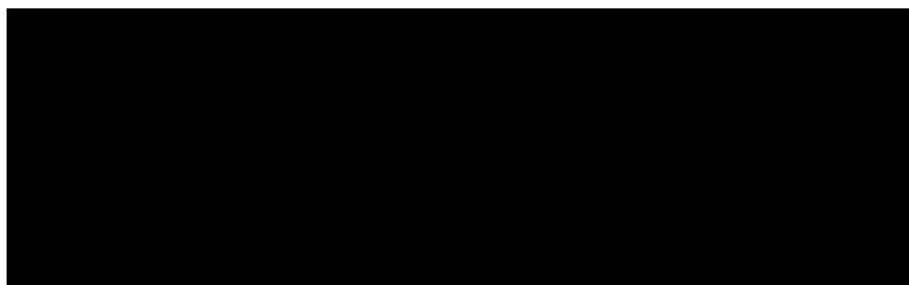
I confirm that Meryl travelled to Melbourne for parliamentary business on 30 October 2023 and then had a personal engagement with her husband in Queensland the following day. As they were unable to secure flights from Melbourne to Newcastle that enabled them to connect with a privately paid flight to Maroochydore, they travelled from Melbourne to Maroochydore directly.

I note that they funded their return flights from Maroochydore to Newcastle as directed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further details.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]



From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM
To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely


Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] (M. Swanson, MP) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 12 February 2025 11:54 AM
To: Assurance
Cc: Swanson, Meryl (MP)
Subject: RE: HPE CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Attachment B - Ms Meryl Swanson MP Travel Data.pdf

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Further to this review Ms Swanson travelled on the dates of 14 and 15 January 2023. Ms Swanson and her husband, [REDACTED] were invited as a guest by Tabcorp to showcase the event as a member of Parliamentary Friends of Thoroughbreds. Because of the strong association with horse breeding and racing in her electorate she accepted the invitation. I note that they paid for their accommodation privately as it was their choice to overnight in Queensland rather than travel back to Brisbane late that evening for a return flight.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

Office of Meryl Swanson MP
Federal Member for Paterson

W: merylswanson.com.au
35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 February 2025 3:57 PM
To: Assurance@ipea.gov.au
Cc: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

I write to you in reference to the above travel. I was the office manager at the time of this travel and spoke with IPEA seeking advice.

I confirm that Meryl travelled to Melbourne for parliamentary business on 30 October 2023 and then had a personal engagement with her husband in Queensland the following day. As they were unable to secure flights from Melbourne to Newcastle that enabled them to connect with a privately paid flight to Maroochydore, they travelled from Melbourne to Maroochydore directly.

I note that they funded their return flights from Maroochydore to Newcastle as directed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further details.

Kind regards
[REDACTED]



From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM
To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

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External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Attachment B

Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

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Airfare – Jetstar Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Melbourne	31/10/2022	06:35 PM	Sunshine Coast	31/10/2022	07:45 PM	\$406.63
Airfare – Jetstar Spouse	[REDACTED]	Melbourne	31/10/2022	06:35 PM	Sunshine Coast	31/10/2022	07:45 PM	\$406.63

1. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
2. With reference to the Determination at **Attachment A**, what was the nature of your parliamentary business in Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
3. Please advise whether your spouse’s travel expenses meet the three-part test in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:
 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
 - b. Your family member was travelling to accompany or join you; and
 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

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COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Williamtown	15/01/2023	07:45 PM	Buchanan	15/01/2023	08:15 PM	\$178.20

4. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
5. With reference to the Determination at **Attachment A**, what was the nature of your parliamentary business in Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
6. Please advise whether your spouse’s travel expenses meet the three-part test in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:
 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
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 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

From: Assurance
Sent: Friday, 11 April 2025 2:56 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)'
Cc: Assurance
Subject: RE: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Ms Meryl Swanson MP - Second Correspondence.pdf; Ms Meryl Swanson MP - First Correspondence.pdf

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)' [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]


OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely


Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

11 April 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP

Member for Paterson

PO Box 156

Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Thank you for the responses to IPEA's letter of 5 February 2025. As advised in our original correspondence, IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.

In our original correspondence (attached), IPEA outlined six questions for your response, which have not been addressed in the responses received from your staff members.

Please provide a personal written response to IPEA's questions via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **Monday 28 April 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Nicole Pearson
Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

5 February 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson
PO Box 156
Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) has responsibility under the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* to undertake assurance activities in relation to the work expenses of members of parliament.

Please note that IPEA publishes completed assurance reviews on the website at www.ipea.gov.au/assurance-audit/published-assurance-reviews.

IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023.

Legislative framework

The use of travel expenses for family reunion must meet the three-part test below, set out in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:

*A family member of a member travels for **family reunion purposes** if:*

- (a) the member is travelling within Australia for the dominant purpose of conducting the member's parliamentary business; and*
- (b) the family member travels to accompany or join the member; and*
- (c) the travel by the family member is for the dominant purpose of facilitating the family life of the member's family.*

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act) and the Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 (the Determination – **Attachment A**) define the four streams of parliamentary business. These are parliamentary duties, electorate duties, party political duties and official duties.

The principles parliamentarians are to apply when utilising public resources are set out in part 3 - division 2 of the PBR Act.

Action Required

Attachment B details your Commonwealth-funded family reunion travel within the period that is relevant to this Assurance Review, and we have set out questions for your response. Where we have asked about the nature of your parliamentary business, please reference the definition of Parliamentary Business as outlined in the Determination and provide copies of documentation to support your response, such as diary notes, invitations or media reporting.

Please provide a written response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **28 February 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
A/g Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017

I, Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, make the following determination.

Dated 14 December 2017

Mathias Cormann
Minister for Finance

Contents

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Schedule 4—Official duties	5

1 Name

This instrument is the *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences at the same time as the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

4 Interpretation

(1) In this instrument:

Act means the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

Note: A number of expressions used in this instrument are defined in the definitions section of the Act, including the following:

- (a) *constituent*;
- (b) *member*;
- (c) *office holder*, and
- (d) *vice regal function*.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, an activity specified in a Schedule to this determination is specified whether it takes place within Australia or overseas.

5 Parliamentary business of members

- (1) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(a) of the Act, the *parliamentary duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 1 for that member.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(b) of the Act, the *electorate duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 2 for that member.
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(c) of the Act, the *party political duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 3 for that member.
- (4) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(d) of the Act, the *official duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 4 for that member.

Schedule 1—Parliamentary duties

(Act s 6(4)(a))

Column 1 Member (or class)	Column 2 Parliamentary duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	<p>In the member's capacity as a member of the Parliament:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Preparing for, participating in and attending to business arising from proceedings of the Parliament, whether by committee of the whole or otherwise;b) Developing, reviewing or amending legislation or proposed legislation, and activities engaged in for that purpose;c) Undertaking research, communication (including with stakeholders) or administration connected with the business of the Parliament, the member's policy portfolio, or their role as a member;d) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from an official government, parliamentary or vice regal meeting, event or function;e) Preparing for, participating in and attending to matters arising from a meeting (including with stakeholders), event or function for the purposes of their role as a member, including in relation to the member's policy portfolio;f) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to business arising from a non-Parliamentary committee, taskforce or other formal group in which the member participates;g) Representing the Parliament, in accordance with an approval of the Parliament or a House of the Parliament, and engaging in associated activities for that purpose;h) Representing a Minister or office holder in their official capacity, at the request of that Minister or office holder, at a meeting, event or function;i) Representing the Government or Australia, with the approval of the Prime Minister. <p><i>Note: For Ministers representing the Government or Australia in their capacity as a Minister, this would be part of the member's official duties (see Schedule 4).</i></p>

Schedule 2—Electorate duties

(Act s 6(4)(b))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Electorate duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In the member's capacity as their constituent's elected representative: a) Facilitating and participating in debate, discussion, a meeting, event or function, or undertaking research or administrative functions relating to matters of importance or interest to constituents (including matters that do not relate exclusively to constituents, such as matters of national importance); b) Otherwise communicating with constituents; c) Representing the views and interests of constituents.

Schedule 3—Party political duties

(Act s 6(4)(c))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Party political duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In respect of the political party to which the member belongs, participating in any of the following in their capacity as an elected Senator or member of the House of Representatives: a) a formal meeting of the political party (including a meeting of the party executive, a committee or a subcommittee); b) a national, state or territory conference.

Schedule 4—Official duties

(Act s 6(4)(d))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Official duties
All office holders and Ministers of State	In the member's official capacity (being their capacity as a Minister or office holder, as the case may be): <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Exercising the powers or functions, or performing the duties, of the member's office, or activities engaged in for the purposes of doing so;b) Attending an event to which the member has been invited in their official capacity;c) Other activities directly related to, and engaged in for the purposes of, performing the member's official role.

Attachment B

Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Work Expense	Traveller	Departure Location	Departure Date	Departure Time	Arrival Location	Arrival Date	Arrival Time	Total Amount
Airfare – Virgin Australia Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Newcastle	30/10/2022	02:40 PM	Melbourne	30/10/2022	04:15 PM	\$513.21
Airfare – Virgin Australia Spouse	[REDACTED]	Newcastle	30/10/2022	02:40 PM	Melbourne	30/10/2022	04:15 PM	\$513.21
Airfare – Jetstar Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Melbourne	31/10/2022	06:35 PM	Sunshine Coast	31/10/2022	07:45 PM	\$406.63
Airfare – Jetstar Spouse	[REDACTED]	Melbourne	31/10/2022	06:35 PM	Sunshine Coast	31/10/2022	07:45 PM	\$406.63

1. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
2. With reference to the Determination at **Attachment A**, what was the nature of your parliamentary business in Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
3. Please advise whether your spouse’s travel expenses meet the three-part test in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:
 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
 - b. Your family member was travelling to accompany or join you; and
 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

Attachment B

Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Work Expense		Departure Location	Departure Date	Departure Time	Arrival Location	Arrival Date	Arrival Time	Total Amount
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COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Broadbeach	15/01/2023	03:30 PM	Bilinga	15/01/2023	04:15 PM	\$77.50
Airfare – Jetstar Self	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Gold Coast	15/01/2023	05:35 PM	Newcastle	15/01/2023	07:45 PM	\$1,212.00
COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Williamtown	15/01/2023	07:45 PM	Buchanan	15/01/2023	08:15 PM	\$178.20

4. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
5. With reference to the Determination at **Attachment A**, what was the nature of your parliamentary business in Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
6. Please advise whether your spouse’s travel expenses meet the three-part test in section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017:
 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
 - b. Your family member was travelling to accompany or join you; and
 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

From: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 April 2025 9:44 AM
To: Assurance
Subject: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Ms Meryl Swanson MP - Second Correspondence.pdf; Ms Meryl Swanson MP - First Correspondence.pdf; Treasury Wines.pdf; Treasury Wines - AHA invite.pdf; Tabcorp invite.pdf

Good afternoon Nicole,

In response to this assurance review:-

1. The dominant purpose of travel to Melbourne on 30 October 2022 was for parliamentary business.
2. The nature of the parliamentary business in Melbourne was in my official capacity as Co-Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture and I attach the invitation as evidence.
3. My spouse travel expenses met the three part test:-
 1. I was travelling for the dominant purpose of Parliamentary Business.
 - b) My family member was travelling to accompany me.
 - c) My family member's travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life. I was in Canberra for a sitting week prior to this event.
4. The dominant purpose of travel to Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023 was for parliamentary business.
5. The nature of the parliamentary business in Queensland was as Co-Chair of Friends of Primary Producers. I accepted the invitation due to the strong association with Thoroughbred horse breeding and primary producers in my electorate. I have attached the invitation as evidence.
6. My spouse travel expenses met the three part test:-
 - a) I was travelling for the dominant purpose of Parliamentary Business.
 - b) My family member was travelling to accompany me.
 - c) My family member's travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

Kind Regards

Meryl Swanson MP
Federal Member for Paterson

[REDACTED]
35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

W: merylswanson.com.au



From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 11 April 2025 2:56 PM

To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)' [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

5 February 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson
PO Box 156
Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) has responsibility under the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* to undertake assurance activities in relation to the work expenses of members of parliament.

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IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023.

Legislative framework

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OFFICIAL: Sensitive

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Attachment B details your Commonwealth-funded family reunion travel within the period that is relevant to this Assurance Review, and we have set out questions for your response. Where we have asked about the nature of your parliamentary business, please reference the definition of Parliamentary Business as outlined in the Determination and provide copies of documentation to support your response, such as diary notes, invitations or media reporting.

Please provide a written response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **28 February 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
A/g Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017

I, Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, make the following determination.

Dated 14 December 2017

Mathias Cormann
Minister for Finance

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(1) In this instrument:

Act means the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

Note: A number of expressions used in this instrument are defined in the definitions section of the Act, including the following:

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(2) For the avoidance of doubt, an activity specified in a Schedule to this determination is specified whether it takes place within Australia or overseas.

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- (1) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(a) of the Act, the *parliamentary duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 1 for that member.
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Schedule 1—Parliamentary duties

(Act s 6(4)(a))

Column 1 Member (or class)	Column 2 Parliamentary duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	<p>In the member's capacity as a member of the Parliament:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Preparing for, participating in and attending to business arising from proceedings of the Parliament, whether by committee of the whole or otherwise;b) Developing, reviewing or amending legislation or proposed legislation, and activities engaged in for that purpose;c) Undertaking research, communication (including with stakeholders) or administration connected with the business of the Parliament, the member's policy portfolio, or their role as a member;d) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from an official government, parliamentary or vice regal meeting, event or function;e) Preparing for, participating in and attending to matters arising from a meeting (including with stakeholders), event or function for the purposes of their role as a member, including in relation to the member's policy portfolio;f) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to business arising from a non-Parliamentary committee, taskforce or other formal group in which the member participates;g) Representing the Parliament, in accordance with an approval of the Parliament or a House of the Parliament, and engaging in associated activities for that purpose;h) Representing a Minister or office holder in their official capacity, at the request of that Minister or office holder, at a meeting, event or function;i) Representing the Government or Australia, with the approval of the Prime Minister. <p><i>Note: For Ministers representing the Government or Australia in their capacity as a Minister, this would be part of the member's official duties (see Schedule 4).</i></p>

Schedule 2—Electorate duties

(Act s 6(4)(b))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Electorate duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In the member's capacity as their constituent's elected representative: a) Facilitating and participating in debate, discussion, a meeting, event or function, or undertaking research or administrative functions relating to matters of importance or interest to constituents (including matters that do not relate exclusively to constituents, such as matters of national importance); b) Otherwise communicating with constituents; c) Representing the views and interests of constituents.

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Member (or class)	Party political duties
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1. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast between 30 and 31 October 2022?
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COMCAR	Ms Meryl Swanson MP	Williamtown	15/01/2023	07:45 PM	Buchanan	15/01/2023	08:15 PM	\$178.20

4. What was the dominant purpose of your travel to Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023?
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 - a. You were travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting your parliamentary business; and
 - b. Your family member was travelling to accompany or join you; and
 - c. Your family member’s travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

11 April 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP

Member for Paterson

PO Box 156

Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Thank you for the responses to IPEA's letter of 5 February 2025. As advised in our original correspondence, IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.

In our original correspondence (attached), IPEA outlined six questions for your response, which have not been addressed in the responses received from your staff members.

Please provide a personal written response to IPEA's questions via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **Monday 28 April 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Nicole Pearson
Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, 5 October 2022 10:25 AM

To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]

Subject: Meeting Request

Hello,

On behalf of Australian Grape and Wine and TWE I would like to thank Ms Swanson for agreeing to be a Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture.

As the worlds largest listed and Australian owned wine company I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to brief Ms Swanson on market and growing conditions both domestically and internationally.

I will be in Canberra on the 25/26/27 October and understand how busy the sitting period is however would greatly appreciate the opportunity for a meeting.

Kind regards



TREASURY WINE ESTATES

THINKERS · MAKERS · DOERS *Welcome*

[REDACTED] Global Director Public Affairs

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] www.tweglobal.com

[REDACTED] (M. Swanson, MP)

Subject: 12.00pm AHA National Board Luncheon
Location: Dogs Flat Lawn Royal botanic Gardens Melbourne
Start: Mon 31/10/2022 12:00 PM
End: Mon 31/10/2022 4:15 PM
Recurrence: (none)
Organizer: Swanson, Meryl (MP)
Categories: Electorate meetings

Good Afternoon,

We look forward to welcoming you to the AHA National Board Luncheon on Monday 31st of October.

Please see event details below and ***note the earlier start time of 12.00pm.***

Date: Monday 31st October 2022
Venue: Dog Flat Lawn, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
Time: **12.00pm** – 4.30pm
Dress code: Business attire

Please find attached a handy map that shows where the event is being held.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

[REDACTED]
EVENTS & ADMINISTRATION
AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION



[REDACTED]
www.aha.org.au
[REDACTED]

Tabcorp



Dear Ms Swanson

On behalf of Tabcorp, it is my pleasure to invite you and a guest to Magic Millions at Gold Coast Turf Club on Saturday 14th of January 2023.

I am attaching your invitation to the **Magic Millions VIP Marquee** (The Dome). Located just past the winning post, The Dome is situated directly on the mounting enclosure. Tickets include entry to the racecourse and The Dome, reserved seating on the Tabcorp table, a deluxe buffet lunch and access to the private bar.

More information including maps and ticketing will be provided closer to the day.

Please contact [REDACTED] to indicate your availability.

We hope you can join for what promises to be a great day at the track!

Warmest regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

General Manager Industry & Government Affairs

[REDACTED]

Tabcorp Holdings Ltd
Level 13, 180 Ann St
Brisbane QLD 4000

Tabcorp



From: Assurance
Sent: Thursday, 29 May 2025 3:36 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)'; Assurance
Subject: CM: RE: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Ms Meryl Swanson MP - Third Correspondence.pdf; Attachment A - Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination.pdf

OFFICIAL

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
 Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
 One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
 E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
 W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 April 2025 9:44 AM
To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Good afternoon Nicole,

In response to this assurance review:-

1. The dominant purpose of travel to Melbourne on 30 October 2022 was for parliamentary business.
2. The nature of the parliamentary business in Melbourne was in my official capacity as Co-Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture and I attach the invitation as evidence.
3. My spouse travel expenses met the three part test:-
 1. I was travelling for the dominant purpose of Parliamentary Business.
 - b) My family member was travelling to accompany me.
 - c) My family member's travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life. I was in Canberra for a sitting week prior to this event.
4. The dominant purpose of travel to Queensland between 14 and 15 January 2023 was for parliamentary business.
5. The nature of the parliamentary business in Queensland was as Co-Chair of Friends of Primary Producers. I accepted the invitation due to the strong association with Thoroughbred horse breeding and primary producers in my electorate. I have attached the invitation as evidence.
6. My spouse travel expenses met the three part test:-
 - a) I was travelling for the dominant purpose of Parliamentary Business.

- b) My family member was travelling to accompany me.
- c) My family member's travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

Kind Regards

Meryl Swanson MP
Federal Member for Paterson

[REDACTED]
35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
W: merylswanson.com.au



From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 11 April 2025 2:56 PM
To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)' [REDACTED]

Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely


Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

24 May 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson
PO Box 156
Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel


Thank you for the response to IPEA's letter of 11 April 2025. As you are aware, IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.

IPEA has further questions for your response in order to progress this matter. The *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017* (the Determination) can be found at **Attachment A** to assist you with your response.

1. In your response of 24 April 2025, you have advised that the dominant purpose of your travel to Melbourne from 30 to 31 October 2022 was parliamentary business, and that you attended the AHA National Board Luncheon in your capacity as Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture. Please provide further information about how your attendance at this event constitutes your parliamentary business. Please reference the Determination when providing your response.
2. In your former staff member's response of 7 February 2025, they have advised that your travel to Maroochydore was for a personal engagement, and that they spoke with IPEA to seek advice in relation to these flights. IPEA maintains records of all personal advice provided to parliamentarians and their staff. IPEA has no record of this advice. Please provide the written advice given by IPEA, or details of the phone call in which this advice was sought.

3. In your response of 24 April 2025, you have advised that the dominant purpose of your travel to Queensland from 14 to 15 January 2023 was parliamentary business, and that you attended the Magic Millions VIP Marquee in your capacity as Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Primary Producers. Please provide further information about how your attendance at this event constitutes your parliamentary business. Please reference the Determination when providing your response.

Please provide a personal written response to IPEA's questions via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **Friday 13 June 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact 

Yours sincerely



Nicole Pearson
Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017

I, Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, make the following determination.

Dated 14 December 2017

Mathias Cormann
Minister for Finance

Contents

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Schedule 2—Electorate duties	4
Schedule 3—Party political duties	4
Schedule 4—Official duties	5

1 Name

This instrument is the *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences at the same time as the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

4 Interpretation

(1) In this instrument:

Act means the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

Note: A number of expressions used in this instrument are defined in the definitions section of the Act, including the following:

- (a) *constituent*;
- (b) *member*;
- (c) *office holder*, and
- (d) *vice regal function*.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, an activity specified in a Schedule to this determination is specified whether it takes place within Australia or overseas.

5 Parliamentary business of members

- (1) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(a) of the Act, the *parliamentary duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 1 for that member.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(b) of the Act, the *electorate duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 2 for that member.
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(c) of the Act, the *party political duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 3 for that member.
- (4) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(d) of the Act, the *official duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 4 for that member.

Schedule 1—Parliamentary duties

(Act s 6(4)(a))

Column 1 Member (or class)	Column 2 Parliamentary duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	<p>In the member's capacity as a member of the Parliament:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Preparing for, participating in and attending to business arising from proceedings of the Parliament, whether by committee of the whole or otherwise;b) Developing, reviewing or amending legislation or proposed legislation, and activities engaged in for that purpose;c) Undertaking research, communication (including with stakeholders) or administration connected with the business of the Parliament, the member's policy portfolio, or their role as a member;d) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from an official government, parliamentary or vice regal meeting, event or function;e) Preparing for, participating in and attending to matters arising from a meeting (including with stakeholders), event or function for the purposes of their role as a member, including in relation to the member's policy portfolio;f) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to business arising from a non-Parliamentary committee, taskforce or other formal group in which the member participates;g) Representing the Parliament, in accordance with an approval of the Parliament or a House of the Parliament, and engaging in associated activities for that purpose;h) Representing a Minister or office holder in their official capacity, at the request of that Minister or office holder, at a meeting, event or function;i) Representing the Government or Australia, with the approval of the Prime Minister. <p><i>Note: For Ministers representing the Government or Australia in their capacity as a Minister, this would be part of the member's official duties (see Schedule 4).</i></p>

Schedule 2—Electorate duties

(Act s 6(4)(b))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Electorate duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In the member's capacity as their constituent's elected representative: a) Facilitating and participating in debate, discussion, a meeting, event or function, or undertaking research or administrative functions relating to matters of importance or interest to constituents (including matters that do not relate exclusively to constituents, such as matters of national importance); b) Otherwise communicating with constituents; c) Representing the views and interests of constituents.

Schedule 3—Party political duties

(Act s 6(4)(c))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Party political duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In respect of the political party to which the member belongs, participating in any of the following in their capacity as an elected Senator or member of the House of Representatives: a) a formal meeting of the political party (including a meeting of the party executive, a committee or a subcommittee); b) a national, state or territory conference.

Schedule 4—Official duties

(Act s 6(4)(d))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Official duties
All office holders and Ministers of State	In the member's official capacity (being their capacity as a Minister or office holder, as the case may be): <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Exercising the powers or functions, or performing the duties, of the member's office, or activities engaged in for the purposes of doing so;b) Attending an event to which the member has been invited in their official capacity;c) Other activities directly related to, and engaged in for the purposes of, performing the member's official role.

From: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 4 June 2025 11:43 AM
To: Assurance
Subject: CM: FW: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Ms Meryl Swanson MP - Third Correspondence.pdf; Attachment A - Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination.pdf

Good morning Nicole,

As per Schedule1, part (c):

1. Parliamentary Friends Groups are designed to provide a network of likeminded businesses and citizens the opportunity to engage with Parliamentarians and Members of staff to assist them in their understanding of their specific interests and responsibilities. The Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture enables stakeholders to receive introductions and references from known Parliamentarians with other stakeholders to enhance opportunities and provide knowledge and experience with hands on experiences. The AHA National Board Luncheon is a very important date on the calendar for stakeholders represented by this friendship group. I am a Chair of this group.
2. There was no official request for this specific travel rather a general request about the difficulties of regional travel meeting requirements.
3. As the Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Primary Producers and a Member of Parliamentary Friends of Thoroughbred, the Magic Millions event is an important occasion for stakeholders of these groups. I meet regularly with relevant stakeholders in this capacity as well as in my former role of Chair of the Agriculture Committee. This is an event where many stakeholders are in the same place at the same time and introductions and networking to improve the quality of parliamentary legislation is an important part of my duties.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]
Federal Member for Paterson

[REDACTED]
 35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
 W: merylswanson.com.au



From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 29 May 2025 3:36 PM

To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) <Meryl.Swanson.MP@aph.gov.au>; Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: RE: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: Swanson, Meryl (MP) <Meryl.Swanson.MP@aph.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 24 April 2025 9:44 AM

To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Subject: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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In response to this assurance review:-

1. The dominant purpose of travel to Melbourne on 30 October 2022 was for parliamentary business.
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 - c) My family member's travel was for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.

Kind Regards

Meryl Swanson MP

Federal Member for Paterson

[REDACTED]
35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
W: merylswanson.com.au



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To: Swanson, Meryl (MP) [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson
Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
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W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

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Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely


Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

24 May 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson
PO Box 156
Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel


Thank you for the response to IPEA's letter of 11 April 2025. As you are aware, IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.

IPEA has further questions for your response in order to progress this matter. The *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017* (the Determination) can be found at **Attachment A** to assist you with your response.

1. In your response of 24 April 2025, you have advised that the dominant purpose of your travel to Melbourne from 30 to 31 October 2022 was parliamentary business, and that you attended the AHA National Board Luncheon in your capacity as Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Viticulture. Please provide further information about how your attendance at this event constitutes your parliamentary business. Please reference the Determination when providing your response.
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3. In your response of 24 April 2025, you have advised that the dominant purpose of your travel to Queensland from 14 to 15 January 2023 was parliamentary business, and that you attended the Magic Millions VIP Marquee in your capacity as Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Primary Producers. Please provide further information about how your attendance at this event constitutes your parliamentary business. Please reference the Determination when providing your response.

Please provide a personal written response to IPEA's questions via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **Friday 13 June 2025**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact 

Yours sincerely



Nicole Pearson
Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017

I, Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, make the following determination.

Dated 14 December 2017

Mathias Cormann
Minister for Finance

Contents

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5 Parliamentary business of members.....	2
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Schedule 3—Party political duties	4
Schedule 4—Official duties	5

1 Name

This instrument is the *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences at the same time as the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

4 Interpretation

(1) In this instrument:

Act means the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*.

Note: A number of expressions used in this instrument are defined in the definitions section of the Act, including the following:

- (a) *constituent*;
- (b) *member*;
- (c) *office holder*, and
- (d) *vice regal function*.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, an activity specified in a Schedule to this determination is specified whether it takes place within Australia or overseas.

5 Parliamentary business of members

- (1) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(a) of the Act, the *parliamentary duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 1 for that member.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(b) of the Act, the *electorate duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 2 for that member.
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- (4) For the purposes of paragraph 6(4)(d) of the Act, the *official duties* of a member are the activities specified in Schedule 4 for that member.

Schedule 1—Parliamentary duties

(Act s 6(4)(a))

Column 1 Member (or class)	Column 2 Parliamentary duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	<p>In the member's capacity as a member of the Parliament:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Preparing for, participating in and attending to business arising from proceedings of the Parliament, whether by committee of the whole or otherwise;b) Developing, reviewing or amending legislation or proposed legislation, and activities engaged in for that purpose;c) Undertaking research, communication (including with stakeholders) or administration connected with the business of the Parliament, the member's policy portfolio, or their role as a member;d) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from an official government, parliamentary or vice regal meeting, event or function;e) Preparing for, participating in and attending to matters arising from a meeting (including with stakeholders), event or function for the purposes of their role as a member, including in relation to the member's policy portfolio;f) Preparing for, participating in, or attending to business arising from a non-Parliamentary committee, taskforce or other formal group in which the member participates;g) Representing the Parliament, in accordance with an approval of the Parliament or a House of the Parliament, and engaging in associated activities for that purpose;h) Representing a Minister or office holder in their official capacity, at the request of that Minister or office holder, at a meeting, event or function;i) Representing the Government or Australia, with the approval of the Prime Minister. <p><i>Note: For Ministers representing the Government or Australia in their capacity as a Minister, this would be part of the member's official duties (see Schedule 4).</i></p>

Schedule 2—Electorate duties

(Act s 6(4)(b))

Column 1	Column 2
Member (or class)	Electorate duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In the member's capacity as their constituent's elected representative: a) Facilitating and participating in debate, discussion, a meeting, event or function, or undertaking research or administrative functions relating to matters of importance or interest to constituents (including matters that do not relate exclusively to constituents, such as matters of national importance); b) Otherwise communicating with constituents; c) Representing the views and interests of constituents.

Schedule 3—Party political duties

(Act s 6(4)(c))

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Member (or class)	Party political duties
All members who are a senator or member of the House of Representatives	In respect of the political party to which the member belongs, participating in any of the following in their capacity as an elected Senator or member of the House of Representatives: a) a formal meeting of the political party (including a meeting of the party executive, a committee or a subcommittee); b) a national, state or territory conference.

Schedule 4—Official duties

(Act s 6(4)(d))

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Member (or class)	Official duties
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From: Assurance
Sent: Wednesday, 8 October 2025 1:16 PM
To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)'
Cc: Assurance; Parl Repayments
Subject: CM: RE: FW: CM: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Fourth Letter - IPEA to Ms Meryl Swanson MP.pdf; PEMS_claim_xx0020307682.pdf

OFFICIAL

Dear Ms Swanson

Please find attached further correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

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As per Schedule1, part (c):

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Kind Regards

Meryl Swanson MP
Federal Member for Paterson

[REDACTED]
35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
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OFFICIAL

Dear Ms Swanson

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Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

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1. The dominant purpose of travel to Melbourne on 30 October 2022 was for parliamentary business.

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5. The nature of the parliamentary business in Queensland was as Co-Chair of Friends of Primary Producers. I accepted the invitation due to the strong association with Thoroughbred horse breeding and primary producers in my electorate. I have attached the invitation as evidence.
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Kind Regards

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Federal Member for Paterson

[REDACTED]
35 Sturgeon St (PO Box 156) Raymond Terrace NSW 2324
W: merylswanson.com.au



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Sent: Friday, 11 April 2025 2:56 PM
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Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

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Sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

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Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 4:38 PM

To: 'Swanson, Meryl (MP)' [REDACTED]

Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Subject: Assurance review of travel and travel-related resources [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson

Dear Ms Swanson

Attached please find correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

8 October 2025

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
Member for Paterson
PO Box 156
Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms Swanson

Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources – Family Reunion Travel

Thank you for the response to IPEA's letter of 29 May 2025. As you are aware, IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of travel and travel-related resources accessed in relation to your family reunion travel between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.

You have stated that the dominant purpose of the flights for you and your spouse from Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022 was for personal business, not parliamentary business. You have also confirmed that you have not sought personal advice from IPEA in relation to this travel.

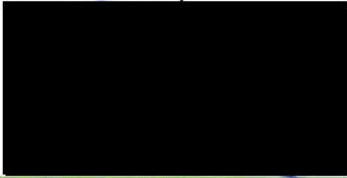
Under section 26(3) of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (the PBR Act), a parliamentarian must not use public resources provided by the Commonwealth other than for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business.

From the information you have provided to IPEA, it appears that your use of this expense is in contravention of section 26 of the PBR Act and must be recovered. In addition to the recovery of both fares from Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast on 31 October 2022, section 38(4) of the PBR Act provides that the member is liable to pay the Commonwealth, by way of penalty for the contravention of section 26, 27 or 28, an amount equal to 25% of the amount to which this section applies.

An invoice for the amount of \$1,016.58 is attached, for the recovery of the two airfares and the 25% penalty loading.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely



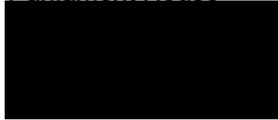
Nicole Pearson
Chief of Transparency, Integrity and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



TAX INVOICE

Invoice To:

Ms Meryl Swanson MP
 Parliament House



Invoice Date: 08.10.2025
Phone number: (02) 6215 3000
Invoice Reference: [REDACTED]
Payment Reference: 3100003450
Customer No: [REDACTED]
Payment Due Date: 07.11.2025
Email: [REDACTED]

On any correspondence,
 please quote the Invoice Reference.

Please pay within 30 days of the invoice date

Item Description	Net Amount	GST Amount	Total Amount
001 *Recovery of Airfare (Spouse) 31 Oct 22	\$369.67	\$36.97	\$406.64
002 *25 percent penalty loading 31 Oct 22	\$203.32		\$203.32
003 *Recovery of Airfare 31 Oct 22	\$369.66	\$36.96	\$406.62

Total: **\$942.65** **\$73.93** **\$1,016.58**

1. Payment by Direct Debit



2. Mailing your payment

All cheques and money orders should be made payable to the IPEA.
 Mail payment together with this stub to:

IPEA
 1 Canberra Avenue FORREST, ACT, 2603

3. Payment by Credit Card

Complete the following and return by email to finance@ipea.gov.au or contact the IPEA Help Desk on (02) 6215 3000 with your credit card details.

Card Type: Mastercard Visa

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____ CCV _____

Name of Card Holder: _____ Signature: _____

Payment Amount: _____ Date: _____ Payment Ref: 3100003450