

Understanding Ministers' Expenses

Information on the expenses disclosed by the Department of Internal Affairs for members of the Executive.

Members of the Executive (Ministers of the Crown) require financial resources and support services to fulfil their responsibilities and to service the public efficiently and effectively. Their entitlement to these resources and support services is specified in the Executive Travel, Accommodation, Attendance and Communications Services Determination (No 2) 2009 (the Determination).

In the Determination the following principles are applied in the use of publicly funded resources by members of the Executive:

- expenditure must be reasonable for the circumstances and able to withstand tax-payers' scrutiny;
- expenditure must be for official ministerial purposes only;
- expenditure must be properly documented and supported with tax invoices/receipts;
- expenditure must be able to withstand audit scrutiny;
- expenditure should represent value for money and cost-effectiveness.

This fact sheet provides information on the expenses disclosed by the Department of Internal Affairs for members of the Executive under the Determination. The Department of Internal Affairs is subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 and has previously released information on expenses for members of the Executive.

Period of disclosure

The expenses shown in the attached table were brought to charge in the period 1 July to 30 September 2011 as per the records held in the Department of Internal Affairs' financial system.

Accounting processes mean that costs in the financial system for each month do not always reflect expenses incurred in that month.

Information disclosed

In addition to the financial resources and support services provided to members of the Executive under this Determination, they are provided with certain entitlements as members of Parliament under a determination administered by the Parliamentary Service. Information on these expenses is disclosed separately by the Parliamentary Service.

Expense categories for members of the Executive include:

- **Air travel**
 - **Domestic** – airfares for members of the Executive.
 - **International** – expenses include airfares, accommodation, internal travel, receptions and related travel costs as these costs are not recorded separately.

International travel for members of the Executive funded from Vote Ministerial Services is approved by Cabinet or in the case of travel to Australia, by the Prime Minister. Travel expenses

shown may include costs for the Minister and any accompanying spouse, staff, members of Parliament or students where relevant, as these costs are not recorded separately.

- **Surface travel** – expenses include VIP Transport Services (Chauffeur drive and self drive vehicles), ferry, trains, taxis and may include the Minister, spouse/partner, accompanying staff as these costs are not recorded separately.
- **Wellington accommodation** – The Department of Internal Affairs attends to the Wellington accommodation requirements of Ministers with non-Wellington primary places of residence in two ways:
 1. **Official Residences.** The Department of Internal Affairs manages, maintains and services a small number of official residences owned by the Crown.
 2. **Wellington Accommodation Payment.** Since 1 November 2009, Ministers in leased properties, that is, not accommodated in a Crown-owned official residence have been transitioned to the Wellington Accommodation Payment as leases have expired. As at 30 September 2011 six Ministers were housed in Crown owned properties.

Further information on the Implementation Plan for the Wellington Accommodation Payment can be found in the Prime Minister's announcement of 7 September 2009.

www.beehive.govt.nz/release/ministerial+accommodation+decisions+announced

- **Out of Wellington Travel Expenses** – includes hotel, meal and incidental expenses for members of the Executive.

All expenses are exclusive of GST, FBT (Fringe Benefit Tax) and depreciation as applicable.

Statutory framework

Members of the Executive are also members of Parliament and, as such, have all the entitlements to travel, accommodation, attendance, and communications services that the Speaker determines, under section 20A of the Civil List Act 1979. These entitlements are set out in the Speakers Directions.

The entitlements for members of the Executive as specified in the Executive Travel, Accommodation, Attendance and Communications Services Determination 2009 are additional or alternative to the entitlements they receive as members of Parliament. These entitlements are determined by the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services, under section 20A of the Civil List Act 1979.

Under the Public Finance Act 1989 the Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services is the Responsible Minister for Vote: Ministerial Services.

The Department of Internal Affairs' policies and administrative processes provided accountability for the way in which Ministerial Services funds are appropriated.

Future Disclosure

The Department of Internal Affairs will provide future information on the expenses of members of the Executive on a quarterly basis.