

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2008-09
22-23 October 2008

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Green Car Fund

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Abetz

QUESTION No.: SI-21

Toyota announced just two days after this grant it would build a next generation, plug-in, lithium ion Camry “geared toward fleet customers in Japan, (the) United States, and Europe”, which will see full-scale production by 2010?

Was the Australian Government aware of this impending announcement when it made the decision to grant Toyota \$35 million?

What guarantees has the Government got the Toyota will invest in new R&D in green cars in Australia as a result of this grant?

ANSWER

The Government was aware that Toyota was in the process of designing and developing the next generation of Camry vehicles, including hybrid vehicles with technological advances, for the global market from the time of the initial discussions with Toyota Australia concerning the hybrid Camry project.

It is our understanding that production of the plug-in, lithium-ion Camry in 2010 will be limited to fleet vehicles, leased from Toyota. This will constitute a low production volume of “trial” vehicles and full-scale production for purchase by private buyers will not commence until 2011-12.

The production of a hybrid Camry in Australia will provide a platform, in terms of capability and engineering expertise, for Toyota to incorporate future modifications (such as plug-in technology and improved efficiency battery technology) as they become available for volume production.

The Government has received assurances from Toyota Motor Corporation that the future investment plans for its Australian operations will facilitate the manufacture of more environmentally friendly vehicles.