

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: ATSB 01

Division/Agency: Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Topic: ATSB Book

Hansard Page: 94, 101 (22/05/06)

Senator Heffernan asked:

CHAIR—Could I ask another dumb question? Should some colours of cars be banned? In my experience—and I have been booked many times—when driving at dusk, some cars because of their colour sort of disappear into the road surface. As Mr Gascoyne said, there is a bit of work to be done on lights, but should we be doing work on the colour of cars? Mr Gascoyne, you can answer that.

Mr Gascoyne—I am not aware of any studies that have been done on the colour of cars, but I am sure they have been done. I am not aware of any proposals anywhere around the world to mandate—

CHAIR—There are one or two colours that are really bad; grey, for instance.

Mr Gascoyne—Intuitively, you would expect so. I expect the research would prove that there are some colours which are inherently safer than others.

CHAIR—If we were fair dinkum, we would probably do something about that too. You do not have to answer that.

Mr Motha—There are a number of studies on mobile phone use. In fact, we have a chapter in the book we produced in 2004—you may be aware of this book. We have a chapter in here that summarises the research. We did not do research of our own; we summarised the research of other people. One of the key findings was that hands-free is as distracting, or possibly more distracting in some cases, than hands-held. The reason for that is that it is not so much the act of using the phone; it is the distraction effect of the actual conversation itself, particularly if that conversation is a fairly stressful one.

Mr Bills—The same book, I should say, also talks about the colour of cars, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR—Yes.

Mr Bills—We will be happy to make sure you have a copy.

Answer:

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau generated the **attached** publication *Road Safety in Australia* to commemorate World Health Day 2004.

In the Senate Committee Hearings on 22 May, Mr Motha cited material from Chapter 17 *Driven to Distraction* that deals with the dangers of inattention including mobile phone use. Mr Bills mentioned the safety impact of car colour which is dealt with in Chapter 18 *Are white cars safest*. These two Chapters are tagged in the attached copy.

[ATSB 01 attachment – not included. Available from committee secretariat on request]

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question: ATSB 02

Division/Agency: Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Topic: Post-Licence Education Program

Hansard Page: 103-104 (22/05/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

The trial will involve 12 months of post-course crash data for evaluation. What are the components of the trial and how long will this process take?

Mr Motha—The way it is envisaged at the moment is that there will be four modules which will be offered to the participants over a period of several weeks—a few months, actually. I could go through those modules for you, if you would like me to do that.

Senator O'BRIEN—Perhaps you could give us those on notice, if that is easier.

Mr Motha—Yes. We could do that for you.

Answer:

There will be four modules in the programme. The first module will begin immediately after the selected novice drivers pass their test for a provisional licence. Module 1 involves registration for the trial and receipt of a package of information, including strategies to reduce exposure to high-risk activities (such as late night driving and driving with peers) during the early months of unsupervised driving. The focus of Module 1 will be self-management of exposure.

The second module will commence 2-3 months after Module 1. This period enables novice drivers to gain some experience driving solo so that they can benefit fully from the following modules. Module 2 comprises a three hour group workshop facilitated by a person with expertise in adult education, particularly in relation to behaviour modification programmes. The groups will comprise about 12 novice drivers. This session will focus on building self-awareness and self-management.

Module 3, delivered about two weeks after Module 2, involves a further three hour group workshop which focuses on self-management of high-risk situations. About two to three weeks later, in Module 4, the novice driver will participate in a two hour on-road session in their own car (or one that they have access to) with a coach (mentor). Module 4 will focus on self-monitoring of driving behaviour. After Module 4, the novice driver will be contacted to obtain evaluation information, including self-reported crashes, over a period of 12 months.

In addition to these novice drivers, an equivalent number of novice drivers will participate as a control group. These control group drivers will be registered in the program as control group participants and provided with a basic information pack. These drivers will not be subject to Modules 1-4 but will be followed up for a period of 12 months to obtain evaluation data.