

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question: ISTP 01

Division/Agency: Infrastructure and Surface Transport Policy

Topic: Pilots and Escort Drivers

Hansard Page: 44 (29/05/08)

Senator Adams asked:

Senator ADAMS—I would like to ask some questions regarding pilots and escort drivers with heavy vehicles. This is in relation to possible federal rebates or taxation incentives for accredited pilots Australiawide to help with the rising fuel costs. In their situation, to claim a GST fuel rebate, the vehicle must be over 4.5 tonne GVM. In all states of Australia a lead pilot vehicle must not exceed 4.5 tonne. Most of these pilot vehicles in Australia weigh between one and three tonnes GVM. Do you have any information on that situation?

Mr Jones—The short answer is, no, we have no information. In the query that was passed through to us relating to pilots and escort arrangements, issues of taxation treatment were not raised at all. But the broader observation that the fuel tax credit entitlement is to the heavy vehicle fleet, the heavy vehicle fleet being defined as 4.5 tonnes and above, is correct. We are clearly not the taxation department.

Senator ADAMS—I realise that.

Mr Jones—That would raise issues of relevance of any particular subset of vehicles on the road below 4.5 tonnes. But there certainly is not a transport specific question or an escort and pilot specific question that we have been aware of in that space.

Mr Wilson—You prefaced the question with a comment about accreditation and the possible benefits associated with accreditation?

Senator ADAMS—Accredited pilots, as in vehicle pilots. The ones that were actually specifically accredited.

Mr Wilson—If you do not mind, we will take the whole question on notice and provide you with an answer.

Answer:

The Department is not aware of any industry representations or requests regarding rebates or taxation incentives for accredited pilot and escort drivers of heavy vehicles.

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Question: ISTP 02

Division/Agency: Infrastructure and Surface Transport Policy

Topic: Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme

Hansard Page: 47-48 (29/05/08)

Senator BARNETT asked:

Senator BARNETT—In terms of the freight equalisation scheme and the wheat freight scheme, you indicated the review that is taking place, and there have been consultations. Can you advise the committee who has been consulted, when they were consulted and when the report will be complete and available?

Mr Sutton—Yes, we can provide a list of the people who attended the public consultations. There are further people on our consultation list we advise what is happening. There will not be a report as such from those consultations. We can certainly provide to the committee the information that is on our website about those consultations.

Senator BARNETT—So you will take on notice who was invited and who was consulted and attended those meetings?

Mr Sutton—Yes.

Senator BARNETT—When and where the meetings occurred?

Mr Sutton—That's correct.

Senator BARNETT—So that is a refusal to provide the report because it is going to the minister? Is that what you are telling us? Or do you want to take it on notice?

Mr Wilson—The department will not be producing a report as such in terms of a document that is a standalone report into the consultations associated with the work we have undertaken. What we will do is take into account our work and our consultations with the community and provide a briefing to the minister in regard to that and any changes to the administrative arrangements that underpin the scheme.

Senator BARNETT—I am asking for any report, briefing papers, documents that you may have relevant to the consultation with members of the public regarding—

Senator O'BRIEN—What you are saying is that it is advice to the minister, is it?

Mr Wilson—I understand the question.

Senator BARNETT—I am happy for you to take it on notice. You cannot refuse, unless you have a reason for refusal, to provide a document.

Mr Wilson—No, I believe, if I understand your question, it was specific to the consultations, the documentation associated with the consultation?

Senator BARNETT—Sorry, I missed that.

Mr Wilson—Was your question about the provision of the material on which we consulted the community or provision of the material I will provide to the minister at the end of the review process?

Senator BARNETT—I am requesting both. I am happy for you to take it on notice, without delaying the committee.

Ms Page—We will take it on notice. But as a matter of practice we do not provide policy advice to the minister to this committee.

Senator BARNETT—I am aware of that. Thank you.

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Answer:

Letters of invitation to the public consultations were sent to those people listed in **attachment A**. The public consultations were also advertised in the major local press (Hobart Mercury, Launceston Examiner and Burnie Advocate on 16 February 2008 and King Island Courier on 27 February 2008) and on the Department's web page.

The people who attended and were consulted during the public consultations are listed in **attachment B**.

The public consultations were held at the following venues:

- Hobart, Grand Chancellor Hotel, 3 March, 9.00 am to noon;
- Launceston, Peppers Seaport Hotel, 4 March, 9.00 am to noon;
- Devonport, Entertainment and Convention Centre, 5 March, 9.00 am to noon;
- King Island, Council Chambers, 6 March, 11.30 am to 4.00 pm; and
- Flinders Island, Sports and RSL Club, 7 March, 9.00 am to noon.

In preparation for the public consultations, a Consultation Paper and an Addendum to the Consultation Paper were released. These are at **attachment C and D**, respectively.

Following the public consultations a summary was prepared and released via the Department's web site. That summary is at **attachment E**.

[ISTP 02 attachments A,B,C,D&E]

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Question: ISTP 03

Division/Agency: Infrastructure and Surface Transport Policy

Topic: Austroads

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Stott-Despoja asked:

How is Austroads regulated by the Commonwealth?

Answer:

Austroads is not regulated by the Commonwealth.