

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Estimates October 2006

Transport and Regional Services

Question No: MLT 01

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport

Topic: Emissions Standards and Guidelines

Hansard Page: 43 (3010/06)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—I just want to go on to the emissions standards and guidelines. I notice that \$12.2 million is the price that has been put on this for supposedly achieving greater fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas reductions. I notice that the strategy is to get the new emissions standards for light and heavy vehicles in place and the *Green Vehicle Guide* and environmental performance criteria for heavy vehicles using diesel. I want to know what reduction in greenhouse gases from the transport fleet has been achieved because of what you have done to date.

Mr Jones—We would have to take that on notice. There is some work being developed by the Portfolios of Environment Protection, Heritage and Transport, under the direction of the Council of Australian Governments. A Report is being prepared which includes a range of data around greenhouse vehicle emission impacts. The Report is not yet final. It is quite likely there is some material there that we could draw on to answer that question but the specifics we would have to take on notice.

Answer:

The \$12.2 million identified on p. 89 of the *Department's Annual Report 2005-06* represents the total cost of Output 1.4.1: Maritime and Land Transport (other than administered programmes).

Three initiatives are identified for 2005-06 relating to managing environmental damage from land transport. Two of these - new vehicle emission standards and the fuel excise credit measures - are directed at noxious air pollutants rather than greenhouse gas emissions. The third, the *Green Vehicle Guide*, is related to greenhouse gas emissions.

The *Green Vehicle Guide* is a resource designed to inform new car consumers about the relative environmental performance of new light vehicles, including their greenhouse gas emissions. While smaller more fuel efficient vehicles, with lower greenhouse emissions, have significantly increased their market share in the last few years, it is not possible to isolate any impact the *Green Vehicle Guide* may have had on this change from other factors (such as fuel prices). Consequently, it is not possible to isolate what reduction in greenhouse gases has resulted from this initiative.

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Question No: MLT 02

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport

Topic: Emissions Standards and Guidelines

Hansard Page: 44 (30/10/06)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Let us put aside the money. Just tell me, whatever you are spending, how are you measuring its effectiveness?

Mr Wilson—To provide you with a detailed answer, I will take it on notice.

Senator MILNE—Thank you, I would appreciate that.

Answer:

The effectiveness of the measures listed on p. 89 of the *Annual Report 2005-06* is assessed as follows:

- **New Emission Standards**

The *Regulation Impact Statement* prepared for the new emission standards, which were developed in conjunction with new fuel standards, concluded that the vehicle and fuel standards will lead to significant reductions in noxious emissions from the new light and heavy vehicle fleet. These reductions will flow through to the fleet overall as these vehicles increase their representation in the total fleet over the medium-long term. Expertise in measuring the impact of these reductions on air quality over time lies with the State based agencies responsible for air quality management.

- **Green Vehicle Guide**

The *Green Vehicle Guide* is an on-line information resource, not a program with specific emission reduction targets. Its effectiveness is judged by visitation rates, and qualitative measures such as its credibility with consumers, its uptake by the media as an authoritative source of information and its use by fleet managers in purchasing policies. The Department collects usage statistics on the site which indicates a steady growth in visits since the *Guide's* launch in mid-2004. These statistics are **attached**. The Department is currently commissioning market research to assess awareness and effectiveness of the *Guide* with consumers, which will be used to consider any necessary changes to the *Guide*.

- **Environmental Criteria for the Fuel Tax Credit**

The Government established the environmental criteria to provide an assurance that high polluting vehicles do not gain access to the fuel tax credit. This measure is directed at promoting good emissions maintenance in the older truck and bus fleet, and does not have specific emission reduction targets.

[MLT 02 attachment]

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Transport and Regional Services

Question No: MLT 03

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport
Topic: Heavy Driver Fatigue Reform Package
Hansard Page: 44-45 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—What input have the current and the previous minister provided in the development of the package?

Mr Wilson—Drawing on my memory, I believe Ministers have discussed the package at least twice previously to the ATC in November, but I would have to check the details in that regard. That would be their opportunity to provide specific directions and policy guidance to the NTC.

Senator O'BRIEN—What other industry groups were consulted and what particular issues were they keen to pursue?

Mr Wilson—I would have to take that on notice. As you would be aware, the NTC has been in charge of finalising the package to go before ATC. Whilst I could list a number of organisations such as the livestock association, the ATA and the State jurisdictional road transport associations, to give you a complete picture I would have to contact the NTC.

Answer:

On taking over the Transport and Regional Services portfolio on 29 September 2006, one of the first in a suite of issues the Minister wanted to focus on was heavy vehicle driver fatigue reform. He was keen to ensure there was a balanced package to put to the Australian Transport Council. The package was subsequently discussed at the ATC, chaired by Mr Vaile, on 13 October 2006. The ATC supported the National Transport Commission (NTC) finalising the package in consultation with jurisdictions and key stakeholders. A heavy vehicle fatigue-related issue raised by Queensland was noted at the ATC Meeting chaired by Minister Truss on 6 June 2006.

On 1 August 2006, the NTC forwarded a news release on the draft reform and public consultation dates to 3,500 parties on the NTC stakeholder database who have previously registered interest in transport reforms. The information and consultation sessions were publicised widely by the NTC, road agencies and industry, and in the national trade, rural and regional media. In total, 34 information sessions were conducted throughout Australia and attended by 1500–2000 persons. The NTC advised that individual meetings and workshops were also held on specific issues including penalties, accreditation and rest areas with emergency services, livestock transporters, primary producers, retailers, unions, industry associations, motoring bodies and freight user groups.

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Transport and Regional Services

Question No: MLT 04

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport

Topic: Heavy Driver Fatigue Reform Package

Hansard Page: 45 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Is there a list on a website which will tell us who actually was involved in the consultation?

Mr S Jones—Not that I am aware of. We would have to check that.

Answer:

No. The National Transport Commission has advised that under current privacy laws, it is not permitted to list details of those involved in consultations without first obtaining their permission to do so.

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Question No: MLT 05

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport

Topic: Heavy Driver Fatigue Reform Package – Options Paper

Hansard Page: 45 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Was that options paper considered in the design of the fatigue reform package?

Mr Wilson—I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Yes. The National Transport Commission advised that the options paper: *Options for Regulatory Approach to Fatigue in Drivers of Heavy Vehicles in Australia and New Zealand February 2001* underpins the reform package. The Report has been supplemented by evidence of safe industry practices and specific expert advice on matters not fully dealt with in the expert options paper, or where there is new evidence available in Australia or internationally.

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Question No: MLT 06

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport
Topic: Heavy Driver Fatigue Reform Package
Hansard Page: 45-46 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—While you are getting information on that, I would also like to know whether any changes to the draft fatigue reform package resulted from consultation with the Fatigue Expert Group. In relation to consultation with industry and other stakeholders, have any changed to the draft fatigue reform package resulted from such consultations and, if so, what are they?

Mr Wilson—I will answer in general, but I will also provide you with a specific answer. The fatigue package has changed. My understanding is that the fatigue package that the NTC will present to ATC Ministers for voting on later this year will be slightly different. It will have been amended from that package that was circulated earlier this year, resulting from consultations with industry and consultations and discussions at the ATC. The package will have changed, but I will get you the specifics in regards to what was changed from the original release to what is circulated.

Answer:

Yes. The National Transport Commission (NTC) advised that consultation with industry and other key stakeholders, including the fatigue experts, has resulted in the following changes to the draft heavy vehicle fatigue reform package.

- Provision of a limited defence under the Standard Hours options to permit a driver to proceed an additional 45 minutes of driving time where a rest stop is not reasonably available;
- Amendments to the fatigue general duty to be more consistent with fatigue management obligations imposed by other regulations such as occupational health and safety regulations;
- Draft legislation now imposes specific duties and responsibilities on other parties in the supply chain and prohibits certain contractual arrangements that adversely affect the ability of the driver to manage fatigue;
- Risk categorisation is now available for all offences to ensure that an appropriate level of penalty applies, commensurate with the level of identified risk;
- Reduced infringements for drivers failing to take short rest breaks where expert advice is less firm on the need for short rest breaks;
- 'Night Hours' and 'Long Hours' to be counted in 15-minute blocks, consistent with counting arrangements for all other parameters;
- Amending the exemptions provision to allow ministerial discretion for particular transport tasks;

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- Additional flexibility in Basic Fatigue Management (BMF) and Advance Fatigue Management (AFM) options through the ability to split rests (6+2 hours with no other restrictions for BMF, and 8 hours in two parts for AFM);
- Stronger but practical record-keeping requirements (removal of requirement to retain records in alphabetical and chronological order);
- Revised accreditation framework to allow for automatic entry to the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) through an equivalent scheme;
- Clearer accreditation standards and a legally-established accreditation framework to ensure nationally consistent determinations on applications for the highest level options;
- Including a 48-hour rest period as an alternative to 28 days compliance to manage movement across from one option to another;
- Allowing smoother transition from the non-participating zone (round trips of 7 days or less require continuing compliance with the participating zone, for longer periods the existing arrangements remain, requiring drivers to only comply with their last 7 hours rest break taken before entering the participating zone);
- Further clarification provided on what constitutes a 'driver's base';
- Provision to allow bus operators to gain accreditation either under NHVAS or under existing state based accreditation schemes;
- Commitment by the NTC to address the issue of training and to facilitate the development of enforcement guidelines prior to the implementation of the new fatigue package; and
- Revision to the fatigue guidelines to ensure consistency with the legislation.

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Question No: MLT 07

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport

Topic: Vehicle Acquisition Policy

Hansard Page: 9 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Following the adoption of the *National Road Safety Plan*, Mr Lloyd made a request to Minister Minchin that the Department of Finance alter its vehicle acquisition policy?

Mr Mrdak—I will take on notice the exact dates, but my understanding is that it took place around the middle of this year, if not earlier. I think it was well in advance of the Australian Transport Council considering the road safety action plan.

Answer:

Yes. Minister Lloyd wrote to the Minister for Finance and Administration on 13 September 2006.

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Question No: MLT 08

Division/Agency: Maritime and Land Transport

Topic: Vehicle Acquisition Policy

Hansard Page: 10 (30/10/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Perhaps, on notice, you can let us know precisely what Minister Lloyd has asked the Minister for Finance to do in relation to Commonwealth motor vehicle acquisition policy.

Mr Mrdak—I will certainly get that for you during today.

Answer:

Minister Lloyd asked the Minister for Finance and Administration to consider measures that would improve the safety of Government fleet vehicles through the increased uptake of vehicle safety features, particularly electronic stability control and head protecting side airbags. This is to be phased in over a two-year period. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration replied on 25 October 2006, and has agreed to the request.