



Australian Government
Department of Defence
Strategy, Coordination and Governance

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ASMES/OUT/2009/ 5

Dr Kathleen Dermody
Committee Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence
and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Dr Dermody *Kathleen*

I write concerning a response Defence provided to a question taken on notice from the Supplementary Estimates hearing the Committee held on 22 October 2008.

During the hearing Defence took a question on notice from Senator Fierravanti-Wells regarding the use of Special Purpose Aircraft. Part of the question requested information on how many requests there had been for a second aircraft to fly journalists since Mr Rudd became Prime Minister.

Defence responded that as at 22 October 2008 there had been four occasions when a second aircraft had been provided. However, an error was made in stating the types of aircraft that had been provided. The correct answer is that there were two commercial charters, one aircraft was a RAAF BBJ and the remaining aircraft provided was a RAAF C-17. I have attached the full question and amended response.

I apologise for this mistake and it would be greatly appreciated if you could pass the correct information onto Senator Fierravanti-Wells. It would also be appreciated if the Committee's website could be updated to list this accurate response.

I look forward to working with you again during 2009 and seeing you at the Additional Estimates hearing on 11 February.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]
Tony Corcoran
Assistant Secretary
Ministerial and Executive Support

27 January 2009

Q5

Special Purpose Aircraft

Senator Fierravanti-Wells, Hansard, 22 October 2008, pp35-41

- a. What would have been the typical seat configuration for the Prime Minister's overseas trips on the B707?
- b. How many journalists usually travelled in the 707 aircraft when accompanying the Prime Minister overseas?
- c. On how many occasions since Mr Rudd became Prime Minister has there been a request for a second aircraft to carry journalists?
- d. How many requests were made during the tenure of the former Prime Minister, Mr Howard, for a second aircraft to accompany him overseas?
- e. From whom did Defence charter the second aircraft used in the Prime Minister's overseas trip in March/April 2008, and how was it configured?
- f. Has the cost of the aircraft chartered by Defence been greater than the cost of one of the regular VIP fleet?

RESPONSE

- a. For overseas tasking the RAAF Boeing 707 in VIP configuration was typically fitted with:
 - o 4 seats in the VIP Suite,
 - o 20 seats in business-class standard, and
 - o 20 seats in economy-class standard.

The mix of seating between business class and economy class could be varied slightly depending on the requirements of the tasking.

- b. On overseas trips when the former Prime Minister travelled by RAAF B707 between 1997 and the withdrawal of the B707 from VIP tasking in 2002, the number of journalists carried on the B707 varied between two and 19.
- c. As at 22 October 2008, since Mr Rudd became Prime Minister, a second aircraft to take journalists has been requested, and provided, on four occasions. **Two were commercial charters, one was a RAAF BBJ and one was a RAAF C-17.**

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Budget Supplementary Estimates; October 2008

Answers to questions on notice from the Department of Defence

- d. During his tenure, the former Prime Minister made five requests for a second aircraft to accompany him overseas.
- e. For the overseas visit in June 2008 to Japan and Indonesia, the OzJet-operated 737-200 series was in standard commercial configuration with eight business-class and 94 economy-class seats, and was chartered from Heavylift Cargo Airlines, a member of the ADF Airlift Standing Offer panel. Heavylift owns OzJet.
- f. The additional cost of the regular Defence VIP aircraft is \$3,355 per hour. The additional cost of the charters in June and July 2008 were \$12,833 per hour and \$15,283 per hour respectively. While the additional cost of charter is higher than the additional cost of using a RAAF VIP aircraft, this is partly offset by recoveries from the larger party of journalists. For the June 2008 charter, Defence expects to recover \$141,679 from journalists. For the July 2008 charter, Defence is currently preparing invoices to be despatched to journalists.