

Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2009
Department of Finance and Deregulation
Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 3, Program 3.1

Topic: Use of private-plated vehicles instead of COMCAR vehicles

Question reference number: F68 a-c.

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Senator Eggleston asked:

- a. Could you tell us the details of the use of private vehicles at capital cities airports that have been used by federal members and senators over the last three years instead of COMCARs?
- b. Why is it that private-plated vehicles are being used increasingly instead of COMCARs when I am told by COMCAR drivers that there are, presumably, stand-by COMCAR drivers available who are not being engaged?
- c. That is certainly not the information I have been provided with by COMCAR drivers in Perth and elsewhere, particularly in Canberra. There is a view that the COMCAR service is not being used, the drivers who are available for work are not being called in and private hire cars are being used instead. What you are saying is totally the opposite of what I have been informed is the case by the drivers, particularly in Perth.

Mr Tune: We will look at the data for you and break it down State: that might help, particularly in relation to the Perth issue. We will see if there is anything there.

Answer:

- a. The number of private vehicles (hire cars and taxis) at capital city airports, used by senators and members over the last three years instead of COMCAR vehicles are:

City Airport	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Adelaide	90	70	103
Brisbane	410	235	162
Canberra	55	113	93
Melbourne	175	157	52
Perth	341	301	313
Sydney	266	166	244
Total	1337	1042	967

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b. Overall the use of hire cars has not increased. The number of COMCAR reservations has increased from 53,974 in 2004-05 to 62,086 in 2008-09 and the number of reservations assigned to hire cars and taxis has not increased at the same rate. In 2004-05, 7947 reservations were assigned to hire cars or taxis and in 2008-09 the figure was 6728. This is a reduction from 14% to 10% use of hire cars and taxis.

c) The percentage of total reservations undertaken by hire cars and taxis has been maintained at 10% over the last three financial years. In Perth, this figure is slightly higher at 18.5% over the past three financial years. These percentages include all reservations in regional areas and country towns where COMCAR does not operate its own vehicles. Work is allocated to ensure the most efficient and economic use of COMCAR resources and funding.