

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 96

Program: 2.2

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: Fatal crashes involving heavy trucks and buses – annual data

Proof Hansard Page/s: 82-83 (25/05/11)

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: Heavy vehicle statistics; can the department provide statistics in relation to heavy vehicle accidents and fatalities by calendar year within the last 10 years?

Dr Dolman: We publish quarterly statistics on heavy vehicles, which includes that data. I can provide you with that data.

Senator WILLIAMS: You are wonderful. The number of fatalities involving articulated vehicles has reduced dramatically over the last 20 years, hasn't it? I was led to believe by about 55 per cent, even given the enormous number of trucks on the road today compared to 20 years ago. I guess there are now four or five times more trucks on the road than what there would have been 20 years ago, but I believe the number of fatalities has reduced somewhat.

Dr Dolman: That is correct; there has been a reduction. There were 127 fatal crashes involving articulated trucks. That is the latest figure—this is for the 12 months to September 2010—which is taken from the latest quarterly report that we have produced. That represents a 5.8 per cent increase over the one-year period and there has been a 3.4 per cent decrease over the last three years.

Senator WILLIAMS: You have those statistics for about 10 years, do you? It would be great if you could provide those. Just in relation to those accidents, do you have a breakdown of the cause of those accidents? Is it fatigue, is its speed, is it worn out equipment?

Dr Dolman: We do not publish the detail of that, but we do have a database which gives information on the causes. So, again, on notice, I could prepare all that.

Senator WILLIAMS: We would like to see that.

Dr Dolman: I could give you a rough breakdown of the categories

Answer:

The number of fatal crashes involving articulated trucks each year shows a decreasing trend over the last decade: 2.4 per cent reduction on average each year. In 2010 there were 127 fatal crashes involving articulated trucks, and 147 deaths. There are presently 32 per cent more articulated trucks on the road than there were a decade ago.

Over the last decade, annual heavy rigid truck crashes also show a decreasing trend, estimated at 3.9 per cent reduction per year. The registrations of these vehicles has grown over 18 per cent over the decade.

There is no trend evident with numbers of fatal crashes involving buses. In 2010 there were 20 fatal crashes and 21 deaths.

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Of all heavy vehicle registrations in 2010, articulated trucks accounted for 17 per cent, heavy rigid trucks account for 65 per cent and buses 18 per cent. Of all heavy vehicle fatal crashes, articulated truck involvement accounted for 60 per cent, heavy rigid truck involvement accounted for 32 per cent, and bus involvement 8 per cent.

Available annual counts for the last ten years are provided in the table below.

Research shows that excessive speed and driver fatigue are leading causes of fatal crashes. Categorising crashes as being fatigue related is usually based on the time of day, the type of crash (for example run off road, and head-on), and the absence of other manifest contributory factors. Most research places fatigue as a contributory factor in 15–20 per cent of all fatal crashes. In relation to heavy articulated truck crashes however, the proportion is 30 per cent. In fatal crashes involving a heavy vehicle, around 10–15 per cent of the killed persons are an occupant of the heavy vehicle, with the majority of those killed being occupants of light vehicles and pedestrians.

National fatal crashes and deaths involving a heavy vehicle

Calendar year	Articulated Truck		Heavy Rigid Truck		Bus	
	Crashes	Deaths	Crashes	Deaths	Crashes	Deaths
2001	146	178	-	-	28	32
2002	171	200	-	-	28	36
2003	142	171	-	- **	26	29
2004	138	151	92	108	30	30
2005	132	155	78	88	29	38
2006	145	170	72	80	19	20
2007	147	182	80	85	25	25
2008	130	151	87	93	21	22
2009	117	141	73	77	25	31
2010 *	127	147	62	77	20	21

* preliminary
 ** not available

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Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Williams asked:

Can the Department please provide statistics in relation to heavy vehicle accidents and fatalities by calendar year for the last 10 years?

In relation to the above, please provide a breakdown of the cause of these accidents where this information is available?

Answer:

Duplicate question - please refer to question 96 – *Fatal crashes involving heavy trucks and buses – annual data.*