



Australian Government

Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

Assurance Review 2025/038

Former Senator Gerard Rennick – staff use of car transport

1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025

Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

Contents

Executive summary	3
IPEA’s statutory audit function	4
Legislative framework	4
Review process	4
Conclusion	5

Former Senator Gerard Rennick – staff use of car transport

Executive summary

1. The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) conducted an assurance review of the use of travel resources by a staff member employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) (the staff member) by former Senator Gerard Rennick.

Scope

2. The scope of this assurance review is use of car transport, specifically use of taxis in Canberra, between 1 July 2024 and 31 March 2025 (period in scope) by a staff member of the former Senator Rennick.
3. The purpose of the assurance review was to determine whether the staff travel resources were used in accordance with the legislative framework.

Reason for review

4. IPEA conducted a routine scan of the use of parliamentary business resources in the office of the former Senator Gerard Rennick in the lead up to the 2025 federal election. IPEA's scan identified that a staff member in Senator Rennick's office frequently travelled by taxi between their accommodation and their place of work at Parliament House. These trips occurred within normal hours of duty over the period in scope. This was in possible contravention of item 16 of Schedule A of the Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements Determination 2023/010 (the Staff Travel Determination).
5. On 31 October 2025, IPEA commenced an assurance review of the use of staff travel resources in the office of the former Senator Gerard Rennick.

Outcome*

6. IPEA found that the staff member's use of staff travel resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.

*Potential outcomes

There are three potential outcomes of an assurance review:

1. Consistent with the framework (rules)

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource complied with the law.

This means the available evidence, including information provided by the member, clearly shows that all obligations under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* were met.

2. Not inconsistent with the framework (rules)

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource was not shown to be against the law.

This means IPEA has accepted the member's explanation that they met their obligations under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*, and IPEA has not found any evidence to the contrary.

3. Not consistent with the framework (rules)

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource did not comply with the law.

This means there has been a misuse of a parliamentary work resource under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*. Where misuse is found, the value of the resource will be recovered, including any applicable penalty.

IPEA's statutory audit function

7. IPEA audits parliamentarians' use of parliamentary business work resources and the use of travel resources by their staff under section 12 of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017*. IPEA conducts assurance reviews to assess the use of resources against the legislative framework to determine if there has been misuse.

Legislative framework

Obligations of staff members when undertaking domestic travel

8. Item 16 of Schedule A of the Staff Travel Determination states:

As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:

- (a) *the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or*
- (b) *the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or*
- (c) *the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.*

9. Item 17 of Schedule A of the Staff Travel Determination provides:

Employees, when travelling as directed on official business, or under the exceptions at item 16, subject to the restrictions at items 1 to 9, may use:

- (a) *taxis;*
- (b) *regulated ridesharing services;*
- (c) *hire cars; and*
- (d) *short-term self-drive cars hired through the travel services provider, or with any car hire company*
.....

Review process

10. IPEA identified that travel resources had been used by the staff member in Senator Rennick's office for travel between their accommodation in Canberra and Parliament House on 23 occasions during the period in scope, in possible contravention of item 16 of the Staff Travel Determination.
11. IPEA wrote to former Senator Rennick on 3 occasions between 31 October and 7 November 2025, detailing the legislative requirements and identifying the 23 taxi trips undertaken by his staff member. IPEA requested that Senator Rennick indicate how these uses of taxis complied with the Staff Travel Determination, including whether the travel was directed by Senator Rennick or an authorised person in his office.

12. Senator Rennick advised IPEA that the staff member’s travel from Parliament House to their accommodation in the evening was undertaken on the grounds of personal safety, and that the morning travel had been undertaken on the basis that the staff member was carrying luggage from the airport.
13. Senator Rennick subsequently contacted the staff member who had undertaken the trips to confirm his initial response to IPEA regarding the grounds on which the travel had been approved. On receiving this advice, Senator Rennick confirmed to IPEA that the staff travel had been approved:
 - on 13 occasions in the evening (Parliament House to the accommodation) on the grounds of personal safety - item 16(a) of the Staff Travel Determination
 - on 10 occasions in the morning (accommodation to Parliament House) on the grounds that the staff member was carrying luggage on the way to the airport – item 16(c) of the Staff Travel Determination.
14. Based on the information provided by former Senator Rennick, IPEA notes that the travel undertaken by the staff member was directed by the senator under items 16(a) and (c) of the Staff Travel Determination.
15. IPEA’s correspondence with Senator Rennick is at **Attachments 1 to 7**.

Conclusion

16. Based on the information made available by former Senator Rennick, IPEA found that the staff member’s use of staff travel resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.