

To the Senators

Firstly, I would like to thank you for creating the opportunity to submit my views and real examples of the failings of Airservices Australia.

I believe That AS is focused on only meeting minimum requirements.

Operational staff have watched with genuine interest the Senate estimates questioning of ARFFS. Staff are as frustrated as the Senate with the responses to questions and the continued “smoke and mirrors” approach AS management have taken.

I’m approaching 37 years’ service and haven’t seen AS management this arrogant and deceptive to the real issues.

AS management continue to provide a facade that all is fine, which on face value appears to be the case, however once you go beyond the shiny brochures and delve into their processes and systems you find gross negligence.

There exists a disconnect between AS management and front-line staff. The business/ARFFS focuses on minimum requirements which is deemed adequate. How this aligns with AS priorities, strategies or values is questionable. This corporate mindset compromises operational staff whom never see outcomes delivered for capability and/or safety. The Government Service Delivery Capability Model surely is not being met in its’ format or intent.

The lack of accountability and reduction in standards clearly identifies a compromised relationship between current AS management and CASA.

The statements made to the Senate at various times are quite laughable if they weren’t so serious. AS managers either don’t know the correct answers which they should, or they don’t want to tell the truth.

The statement made to Senate that” changes aren’t budget driven” is quite remarkable. This raises the question why AS Management won’t tell Senate the real situation, examples below provide an insight.

1. Push for change of threshold for ARFFS to 500 thousand movements: AS were struggling with growth and needed to stop new stations opening. Hoping to create freeing up of assets particularly fire vehicles and staff. There was no other plan and the delays to projects and working group findings will now bite the ARFF due to lack of forward planning. Vehicles remain a concern due to no action being taken in a timely manner. Vehicle 5 replacement program has been recently reviewed after being shelved for five years from the initial report (have a hard copy of original report). Nothing has changed. There is still a need to create capacity first for various reasons (particularly at category nine and ten) then start to replace the rest of fleet in future budgets. The fact ARFF brought the MK7 vehicle back into service when was moth-balled and still haven’t organised replacements against these vehicles shows something is wrong. A new vehicle takes around two years to get into service from signing of contract; hence you must be in front of the game very early.

2. Station new builds and renovations have become embarrassing. The cost blowout is commonplace. Future-proofing with operational focus isn’t happening correctly. Brisbane’s renovations went from \$2.8 million to around \$5.2 million. Brisbane’s new station for the new runway has many issues- recently it was discovered the fire access road from the station has been removed. Concept of Operations raised many issues which still haven’t been addressed, as the desk-top scenarios were with old category ten staffing and not the new cross-crewing model. The positioning of the Fire Station has been debated by operational staff with the project team since day one of project and continues to fall on deaf ears.

3. Safety critical issues remain caught up in AS systems with fixes not completed in timely manner. Darwin incident is an example of fixes not being carried out; even when the inquiry states AS were remorseful and Comcare had a PIN. The DSU paperwork is a good example of a safety issue not being completed and worse still CASA being part of the failings. Current vehicle safety issues have not been completed with a paper trail over years.

There are many more examples that, if needed, I would be happy to provide or clarify further if requested.

I have tried to keep my submission simple and have used examples that should quickly show what the Senate was being told hasn't been factual. I have left CASA failings and examples out of my submission; however, they are a large part of the current problems and must change to be a real regulator with up to date standards for AS/ARFF to go forward. CASA standards are well overdue for a full review and rewrite to bring things in line with current international standards and recommendations.

Thanks again for the opportunity to provide my submission and I am happy to provide further details by any means.

Regards

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