

## **Rural And Regional Affairs And Transport**

The future of Australia's aviation sector, in the context of COVID-19 and conditions post pandemic

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

#### **Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

IQ21-000081

**Division/Agency:** DIV - Domestic Aviation and Reform

**Topic:** Ground handling alliance concerns

**Proof Hansard Page:** 28 (06 September 2021)

#### **Senator Tony Sheldon asked:**

Senator SHELTON: It was November, December, January and February. But I'm asking you a broader question. You're saying that you haven't had those concerns raised by the ground handling alliance. The way you're answering the question just seems implausible because there have been a whole series of public statements from that association, which I gather you monitor, and you can answer that in a moment. I gather they've had meetings with you. They've raised these concerns about the nonretention of staff because of the fact that you've given money in some circumstances only to the airlines, as you've outlined. So are you still saying to me that there have been no concerns raised? Ms Brown: Possibly we can take that question on notice so I can discuss it with colleagues that may have had more direct conversations.

#### **Answer:**

The ground handling industry is currently being supported through the Aviation Services Accreditation Scheme (ASAS) program which provides funding to assist with the costs of mandatory training, certification and accreditation for a significant proportion of ground handling companies' pre-COVID workforce, to support the recovery of domestic aviation. The program will provide up to \$52.0 million between 29 March and 31 December 2021, or until funding is exhausted.

The Australian Aviation Ground Handling Alliance (AAGHIA) has sent correspondence to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development on a number of occasions throughout the pandemic. Correspondence dated 5 August 2021 raised the ASAS program, concerns about retaining workers and the time necessary to recruit, train and accredit new employees. AAGHIA suggested that without receipt of support similar to that provided to airlines there could be labour shortages that impacted flights in November, December, January and February.

Departmental officials have also met with AAGHIA representatives a number of times to discuss the development of the ASAS program and support available to the sector.