

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

Australia's Antarctic Territory – 19 October 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: JSCNCET - Australia's Antarctic Territory - Q3 - Aerodromes - Other countries

Question reference number: 3

Member: Leeson, Julian

Type of question: Spoken, Hansard Pages 5-6

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 November 2017

Question:

Mr LEESER: Do any other countries have aerodromes within their territory in Antarctica?

Cdre Hatcher: Yes, they do.

Mr LEESER: What are those countries?

Cdre Hatcher: I need to take that on notice to give you a complete list.

Mr LEESER: Do any of those countries have year-round aviation access?

Cdre Hatcher: I will take that on notice as well, if you like.

Answer:

The majority of countries with national Antarctic programs use aircraft to support their activities in Antarctica. Those making considerable use of fixed-wing aviation in Antarctica include Argentina, Australia, Chile, China, Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US). There are approximately 50 active airfields in Antarctica. These include national Antarctic program facilities and non-government operations (primarily supporting tourist groups). The majority of airfields only support small-to-medium wheeled ski-equipped aircraft for intracontinental flights. In 2017-18 ten runways/airfields will support direct intercontinental flights to/from the north of Antarctica. Argentina, Australia, Chile, Italy, Norway, Russian Federation, UK and US operate one each and the private sector operates two. Aircraft operations in Antarctica are mainly restricted to the Austral summer period (November to March). The Argentinian, Chilean and US airfields that support intercontinental flights provide a year-round link to Antarctica, but are still predominately used in summer. For example, the US airfield supporting McMurdo Station has one intercontinental flight scheduled per month over winter.