

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

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

ANSWER TO WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ22-000023

Division/Agency: DIV - Domestic Aviation and Reform

Topic: Aviation industry - breakdown in skill sets

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Tony Sheldon asked:

ACTING CHAIR: I appreciate you'll be correlating information in various different ways, so I'm going to make this very broad, based on what you have available—and I'm mindful of our tight time line: can you take on notice the total number in the aviation industry, and, if possible, the breakdown in skill sets? And if you're able to break down the last figure of 90,000 in any terms between now and that 90,000 figure—you may come back with stats for the week or the month, or you may propose something else because of what's available. I'm asking whether you have access to—and also whether this is information that is held by the department—to information about how the government contracts break down expenditure between different airlines and whether it's possible to get that information for the last five years. That specifically goes to the question of flights by carriers for government contracts, so the arrangements that are entered in to for public servants to move around and for politicians to move around. I'm trying to get a handle on the economic footprint of the government in the context of flights booked and paid for and what the total figure is across the board, if possible for the last five years.

Mr Wood: We wouldn't hold that information; I think the Department of Finance would. I guess we can see what's available, but it's not information that's provided to us, unless Ms Quigley has it.

Ms Quigley: No, particularly not that government breakdown. Is that data for individuals travelling for business purposes on airlines?

ACTING CHAIR: I'm talking about arrangements for the federal government and I'm including both public servants and politicians. The reason I'm asking that question and trying to find out whether you hold that information is that one of the things that seems important to me is that the department should have ready access to information and the AG's Department should make it available to the department, as should government employers such as Treasury and Finance. We need to know what is actually happening in the aviation industry because I believe somebody needs to be holding all that information in one place so that strategic decisions can be made and recommended to government based on the impact of one thing on another. We need that information to be feeding back within the department, so I'm interested in whether that information does or does not feed back, although I would be disappointed if it did not.

Ms Quigley: We'll have to take that on notice. I'm not sure what datasets would be available, but we can certainly look into that for you.

Answer:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department estimates that aviation supported between 90,000 and 120,000 jobs in aviation-related or supporting roles (depending on what roles are included), as well as enabling travel, freight movement, and tourism. Of this workforce, recent analysis undertaken for the Department estimated 52 percent people work across airlines, airports, ground handling and engineering roles, the other 48 percent are estimated to work in supporting roles, including airport security, retail, food and beverage, car rentals and more.

Over the eighteen months from February 2020 to August 2021, according to the latest release of detailed labour force data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, air and space transport

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employment fell 28.2 per cent (from 51,800 to 37,200 people). In the 3 months from August to November 2021, air and space transport employment increased by 4,900 people to 42,100, or 13.2 per cent.

The air and space transport figures represent the total number of employed persons, including both full time and part time, across the ANZSIC industry sub-division code. These figures are lower than the Department's estimate of jobs supported by the aviation sector, as our understanding is it excludes some workers involved in airport operations, aircraft maintenance, repair and manufacturing, indirect aviation-related jobs such as airport-based retail and car rental, domestic and international air freight forwarding, aerial surveying services and transport of passengers by aircraft solely for sightseeing purposes.

Under the Retaining Domestic Aviation Capability program, participants were required to maintain their total domestic workforce numbers at 30 July 2021 levels. This included the two major airlines, who also from 1 December 2021, reinstated all stood down staff. There have been no announcements since then relating to any further stand downs or job losses.

With regard to the economic footprint of the government in the context of flights booked and paid for, the question is more appropriately referred to the Department of Finance.