

COVID-19
ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

IQ20-000005

Division/Agency: COVID Aviation Response Programs

Inquiry: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Topic: Collection of ticketing class information

Proof Hansard Page: Written (29 September 2020)

Senator Kristina Keneally asked:

On Thursday 24 September 2020, the Department indicated at the COVID-19 Select Committee that while it is aware of the number of passengers on each flight flying into Australia, it can not provide data on the availability of first, business, economy class seats.

- a. Why did the Department not start collecting this data so that the Government would have accurate data to understand the availability of economy seats for Stranded Australians to return home?
- b. Does the Department have any other available data to indicate the availability of economy seats for Stranded Australians to return home?
- c. Will the Department now start collecting this data so that Australians can have confidence that economy seats are available for Stranded Australians to return home?

Answer:

The Department does not collect information on tariffs (airfares), and most of Australia's bilateral air services agreements include a provision that filing of such information shall not be required.

The availability of seats into Australia is constrained by caps put in place on inward passenger numbers at the request of State and Territory Governments and as agreed by the National Cabinet.

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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IQ20-000006

Division/Agency: COVID Aviation Response Programs

Inquiry: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Topic: Regulatory basis for passenger caps

Proof Hansard Page: Written (29 September 2020)

Senator Kristina Keneally asked:

Please provide a detailed outline of the legislative framework/Act used to implement the cap on international incoming arrivals.

- a. Which legislation is used to enforce the cap?
- b. What appeal and review mechanisms are in place for commercial operators impacted by the cap?
- c. What appeal and review mechanisms are in place for individuals who are impacted by the operation of the cap?
- d. What legislative framework/Act is used to implement the State-based caps?
- e. What appeal and review mechanisms are in place for commercial operators impacted by the State-based caps?
- f. What appeal and review mechanisms are in place for individuals who are impacted by the operation of the State-based caps?

Answer:

- a. Section 31(1)(f) of the Air Navigation Regulation 2016 was applied in the public interest.
- b. Commercial operators (airlines) were advised that they could use the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for review of the decision.
- c. N/A. Caps are applied to commercial operators (airlines), not to passengers.
- d. Refer to answers a-c.
- e. Refer to answers a-c.
- f. Refer to answers a-c.

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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IQ20-000007

Division/Agency: COVID Aviation Response Programs

Inquiry: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Topic: Briefings for Ministers and SES on passenger caps and quarantine

Proof Hansard Page: Written (29 September 2020)

Senator Kristina Keneally asked:

For each of the following, please provide the relevant dates the brief was prepared, the title of the brief, and to whom the brief was provided to:

- a. Briefs prepared for Ministers on the impact of introducing the international flight cap, before Prime Minister announced the cap on 10 July 2020.
- b. Briefs prepared internally in your Department for SES members on the impact of introducing the international flight cap, before Prime Minister announced the cap on 10 July 2020.
- c. Briefs prepared for Ministers on the impact of the international flight cap, from 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.
- d. Briefs prepared internally in your Department for SES members on the impact of international flight cap, 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.
- e. Briefs prepared for Ministers on options for the Commonwealth to provide additional support to the States to manage quarantine for international arrivals other than providing ADF personnel from 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.
- f. Briefs prepared internally in your Department for SES members on options for the Commonwealth to provide additional support to the States to manage quarantine for international arrivals other than providing ADF personnel from 10 July 2020 to 24 September 2020.

Answer:

- (a) to (d) Following the introductions of passenger caps at Australian International airports in July 2020 at the request of State and Territory Governments, there has been ongoing briefing of Departmental SES members, the Minister and the Minister's office in the context of National Cabinet.
- (b) (e) to (f) Briefing related to ADF and support related to quarantine are a matter for other agencies.

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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IQ20-000008

Division/Agency: COVID Aviation Response Programs
Inquiry: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
Topic: Evacuations from Wuhan and the Diamond Princess
Proof Hansard Page: Written (29 September 2020)

Senator Kristina Keneally asked:

Please provide a detailed explanation of the measures take to evacuate Australians from Wuhan and the Diamond Princess, and your agency's role. Please include the following information:

- a. How many Australians were evacuated and placed in quarantine in each facility?
- b. What were the total costs to Government for the evacuation?
 - i. What was the cost to your agency for the evacuation?
- c. Please provide a detailed outline of the legislative framework/Act used to implement quarantine for these evacuations, and your agency's involvement in implementing quarantine.
- d. Please provide any details of cooperation with States/Territories to implement these evacuations and quarantine by your agency.
 - i. Please include details of any contracts / costs that your agency commissioned the State / Territory to deliver.
- e. Please indicate which agency was responsible for the following – and your agency's relationship / work with these agencies on these topics:
 - i. Managing repatriation flights
 - ii. Managing quarantine facilities
 - iii. Managing the public health aspects of quarantine
- f. Please provide a list of any private contractors, consultants or service providers that were used by your agency to facilitate the evacuation and quarantine of these Australians. Please include the following information:
 - i. Nature of the service being provided
 - ii. Value of the contract
 - iii. Name of the private contractors, consultants or service provider
 - iv. Date the contract between the private contractor, consultant or service provider was signed

Answer:

The evacuation of Australians from Wuhan and the Diamond Princess was managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

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IQ20-000009

Division/Agency: COVID Aviation Response Programs

Inquiry: Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Topic: Prioritisation of stranded Australians

Proof Hansard Page: Written (29 September 2020)

Senator Kristina Keneally asked:

Is your agency aware of any Australian Government policy, process or procedure that is in place to ensure that stranded Australians will be prioritised over other potential entrants to Australia?

- a. If yes:
 - i. Can you name those policies, processes or procedures?
 - ii. When did these policies, processes or procedures come into effect?
- b. If no:
 - i. Are any policies, processes or procedures being prepared to ensure that stranded?

Answer:

A process is in place for airlines to request from the Department an increase in their passenger cap allocation for individual flights for passengers with an urgent compassionate or medical need to travel.

Airlines were notified of this process by the Department on 26 August 2020. Such requests are considered and granted wherever possible, subject to the availability of sufficient quarantine capacity.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade also works closely with airlines to support the return of Australians overseas.