

Question on notice no. 88

Portfolio question number: 479

2017-18 Supplementary budget estimates

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Infrastructure and Regional Development Portfolio

Senator Glenn Sterle: asked the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on 23 October 2017—

The current CASR Regulations contain the obligation for the ARFFS to respond to any fire on the aerodrome whether it started in an aircraft or not. It is also a very firmly established practice for the past 20+ years that ARFFS will respond to any medical emergencies on the aerodrome. This has provided aerodrome users/owners with a significantly advanced level of safety.

It reduces the insurance premiums of the airport owners, tenants and users. It has been responsible for saving several very important buildings and installations on the airports.

It overcomes the very strict and likely to get stricter security access into the restricted airside environment.

It has most importantly directly saved many lives over that 20-year period.

It provides immediate response within the chain of survival that the State Ambulance services can due to workloads, security/access restrictions and the requirements for escort into the airside areas.

Questions:

1. Does Airservices Australia support the removal of this safety requirement from the new regulations?
2. What has changed to make saving peoples lives and property no longer the ARFFS role when they are obviously the most suitably located and qualified emergency service with full unrestricted access to the airside environments?
3. How does removing this vital function of the ARFFS meet the statement of expectations from Minister Chester that he requires a World Class ARFFS?

Answer —

1. - 3. The proposed new regulations will continue to contain the obligation for ARFFS to respond to any fire

on an aerodrome. Specifically, functions of ARFFS, as set out in CASR 139.H, will continue to be to:

1. rescue persons and property from an aircraft that has crashed or caught fire during landing or take-off; and
2. to control and extinguish, and to protect persons and property threatened by, a fire on the aerodrome, whether or not in an aircraft.

Airservices Australia does, and may continue to, provide other services when it has the capacity to do so, such as first aid and “non-aviation” rescue and firefighting.