

Question on notice no. 306

Portfolio question number: SQ23-005060

2023-24 Supplementary Budget estimates

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts Portfolio**

Senator Bridget McKenzie: asked the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on 2 November 2023—

(1.It has been reported that 65% of union members working at CASA indicated that working additional hours has affected the quality of safety inspections, the effectiveness of safety regulation, work health and safety, and work culture. Are the staffing levels at CASA adequate?

2.If staffing levels are inadequate, in which regions are the shortfalls most critical?

3.What needs to be done to address CASA's staffing issues?

4.Do you support Professional Australia's call for the immediate hiring of 36 additional technical staff at CASA?

5.Do you support the call for a review of CASA's staffing levels?

6.Are CASA employees working excessive amounts of overtime?

7.What fatigue management processes does CASA have in place?

8.Have these processes been adhered to?

9.How would you describe the current work culture at CASA?

10.How would you describe workforce morale at CASA?

Answer —

Please find answer attached

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Committee Question Number: 306

Departmental Question Number: SQ23-005060

Division/Agency Name: Agency - Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Hansard Reference: Written (02 November 2023)

Topic: CASA - Working conditions and staffing issues of CASA employees

Senator Bridget McKenzie asked:

1. It has been reported that 65% of union members working at CASA indicated that working additional hours has affected the quality of safety inspections, the effectiveness of safety regulation, work health and safety, and work culture. Are the staffing levels at CASA adequate?
2. If staffing levels are inadequate, in which regions are the shortfalls most critical?
3. What needs to be done to address CASA's staffing issues?
4. Do you support Professional Australia's call for the immediate hiring of 36 additional technical staff at CASA?
5. Do you support the call for a review of CASA's staffing levels?
6. Are CASA employees working excessive amounts of overtime?
7. What fatigue management processes does CASA have in place?
8. Have these processes been adhered to?
9. How would you describe the current work culture at CASA?
10. How would you describe workforce morale at CASA?

Answer:

1. As at 8 November 2023, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority's (CASA) Average Staffing Level (ASL) was 832.4 (against an ASL limit of 832). CASA has not identified shortfalls in any aviation technical area that would cause concern to aviation safety.
2. CASA applies a national model that ensures coverage of all regulatory tasks can be performed across Australia at all times.
3. CASA is currently developing a five year Workforce Plan to identify opportunities to focus future recruitment and training in aviation technical areas.

CASA is currently conducting a recruitment process for multiple Flight Operation Inspectors and Air Worthiness Investigators (applications closed 3 November 2023) to assist in addressing any backlog of work.

4. No.
5. CASA is currently developing a five year Workforce Plan which will initially focus on the aviation technical workforce, to maximise effectiveness in delivering aviation safety while maintaining within CASA's ASL.

6. Over the last two financial years there has been no overtime payments for any aviation technical staff.
7. CASA manages fatigue through the provision of Time Off In Lieu for hours beyond reasonable hours worked, in accordance with Enterprise Agreement provisions.
8. Yes, where practicable.
9. CASA staff members rally together to achieve objectives. The bonds formed amongst team members are strong and long lasting.

This is reflected in the 2023 APS Census data which states that:

- 81 per cent of respondents believe strongly in the purpose and objectives of CASA.
- 79 per cent of respondents are committed to CASA's goals.
- 68 per cent of respondents are proud to work at CASA.
- 77 per cent of respondents have supervisors ensuring that everyone can be included in workplace activities.

10. As indicated above, CASA staff through their responses to the APS Census indicated a strong engagement score however, it is acknowledged that there are always opportunities to improve culture. In response to staff feedback through the APS Census, CASA is currently developing its action plan. Complementing this work and following changes to the *Work Health Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)* on psychosocial risk management, CASA engaged organisational psychologists, Aspect Group to undertake a discovery process to identify psychosocial factors that pose a risk to and/or enhance the mental health of employees drawing on workshops. A staff working group is currently developing a proposed action plan to address identified factors, which complements the development of the CASA 2023 APS Census action plan that will continue to build on workforce led initiatives related to Living CASA's Values.