

Question on notice no. 211

Portfolio question number: SQ24-000357

2023-24 Additional estimates

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

Senator Lidia Thorpe: asked the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on 23 February 2024—

(1.Can you please provide information around the regulatory framework for ongoing operations, specifically the application and approvals processes (with Civil Aviation Safety Authority and other relevant bodies) that companies undertaking rocket testing and suborbital operations must undertake for each rocket launch, re-entry or other activity?

2.What are the planned launches and applications of operations of Southern Launch in South Australia scheduled for 2024/25, including rocket launches, re-entries and other related activities?

3.What are the other regulatory requirements that a company like Southern Launch must undergo in relation to community consultation, risk assessments, environmental management and cultural heritage management?

Answer —

Please find answer attached

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 2023 - 2024

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Committee Question Number: 211

Departmental Question Number: SQ24-000357

Division/Agency Name: Agency - Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Hansard Reference: Written (23 February 2024)

Topic: CASA - rocket testing and suborbital operations

Senator Lidia Thorpe asked:

1. Can you please provide information around the regulatory framework for ongoing operations, specifically the application and approvals processes (with [Civil Aviation Safety Authority](#) and other relevant bodies) that companies undertaking rocket testing and suborbital operations must undertake for each rocket launch, re-entry or other activity?
2. What are the planned launches and applications of operations of Southern Launch in South Australia scheduled for 2024/25, including rocket launches, re-entries and other related activities?
3. What are the other regulatory requirements that a company like Southern Launch must undergo in relation to community consultation, risk assessments, environmental management and cultural heritage management?

Answer:

1. Overarching responsibility for rocket testing and sub-orbital operations sits with the Australian Space Agency.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority's (CASA) responsibilities are limited to rocket launches as set out in the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998. CASA is also responsible for the regulatory oversight of *small model rockets*, *model rockets* and *rockets that are not a model rocket* that are planned to be operated up to a maximum of 100km from the ground.

When considering applications, applicants need to demonstrate that they understand and can manage the safety risks presented to members of the public, their property, and other airspace users as a result of the proposed operations.

2. On the 23rd of February, CASA had one application for Southern Launch for an area approval.
3. Additional regulatory requirements and considerations as they relate to the launch of rockets include:
 - *consultation* – as part of the application to CASA an applicant is required to undertake consultation with other known airspace users so as to mitigate the risk presented by their proposed operations;

- *risk assessments* – a risk assessment underpins the safety case for an application. CASA considers risks and mitigations specifically in relation to unsafe and hazardous operation;
- *environmental management* – CASA's Office of Airspace Regulation considers environmental factors of the activity as part of an assessment of an Airspace Change Proposal application; and
- *cultural heritage management* – this is outside the remit of CASA's regulatory remit.