

Question on notice no. 235

Portfolio question number: SQ24-000337

2023-24 Additional estimates

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

Senator Susan McDonald: asked the Australian Maritime Safety Authority on 23 February 2024—

(1.Of the10 questions I submitted, the exact word-for-word answer was given for nine of them, all referencing commercial sensitivity and a "lack of desire" to provide further comment. The only distinct response still hides behind a reference to commercial sensitivity and does not answer the question. What is being hidden and why?

2.Did the Minister and/or the Department have input into these AMSA answers?

3.If so, when and why

4.In the nine exact same answers provided, the advice is that the "current contract for aids to navigation maintenance remains in place until 30 June 2024 and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will ensure the network is maintained appropriately after that date." It took 15 weeks from the date I submitted my written questions on 31 October 2023 for the answers that didn't answer anything to be published. If we use 15 weeks as the benchmark for questions to be answered, I calculate that 15 weeks from today's date of 23 February 2024 is 07 June, just three weeks before 30 June and the completion of the current contract for aids to navigation maintenance.

(a) Should I expect answers to my current round of questions by the next Senate Estimates?

(b) Is 15 weeks the usual time that AMSA or the Department or the Minister takes to respond to queries

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: 235

Departmental Question Number: SQ24-000337

Division/Agency Name: Agency - Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Hansard Reference: Written (23 February 2024)

Topic: AMSA - responses to Questions on Notice

Senator Susan McDonald asked:

1. Of the 10 questions I submitted, the exact word-for-word answer was given for nine of them, all referencing commercial sensitivity and a “lack of desire” to provide further comment. The only distinct response still hides behind a reference to commercial sensitivity and does not answer the question. What is being hidden and why?
2. Did the Minister and/or the Department have input into these AMSA answers?
3. If so, when and why
4. In the nine exact same answers provided, the advice is that the “current contract for aids to navigation maintenance remains in place until 30 June 2024 and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority will ensure the network is maintained appropriately after that date.” It took 15 weeks from the date I submitted my written questions on 31 October 2023 for the answers that didn’t answer anything to be published. If we use 15 weeks as the benchmark for questions to be answered, I calculate that 15 weeks from today’s date of 23 February 2024 is 07 June, just three weeks before 30 June and the completion of the current contract for aids to navigation maintenance.
 - a) Should I expect answers to my current round of questions by the next Senate Estimates?
 - b) Is 15 weeks the usual time that AMSA or the Department or the Minister takes to respond to queries

Answer:

1. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has not concealed detail on this procurement, however it is a legal requirement that some information remains confidential. AMSA appeared at a spill-over hearing as part of Additional Estimates on 25 March 2024. Prior to that appearance, AMSA provided revised, detailed and individual responses to these question on notice, at the RRAT Senate Committee’s request.
- 2.-3. Responses were provided through the normal process for submission of question on notice. This took place in the period between the questions being provided to AMSA and the responses being submitted to the committee.
4.
 - a) yes.

b) responses are provided through the normal process for submission of question on notice as soon as practicable.