

**Question on notice no. 32**

**Portfolio question number: SQ24-000030**

**2023-24 Additional estimates**

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

**Senator Bridget McKenzie:** asked the Airservices Australia on 12 February 2024—

Senator McKENZIE: I've received information from a number of applicants who went through around six months of screening processes. In June last year you changed your guidelines and rejected some candidates. How many applications did this change affect?

Mr Harfield: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator McKENZIE: But that is a fact: that it is six months of screening?

Mr Harfield: Usually, by the time we put people through aptitude testing and, after that testing, do interviews, it can take up to six months.

Senator McKENZIE: Why were these applicants rejected without warning or explanation after going through that process?

Mr Harfield: I need to take that on notice. I don't have that information currently.

Senator McKENZIE: Mr Curran, do you know?

Mr Curran: No, I don't know the specifics about the individuals who went through our screening process and at what stage they were-

Senator McKENZIE: I don't want them identified. I do want to know, as part of due process and natural justice, why you change a process and they're all of a sudden kicked out.

Mr Harfield: There were two streams of intake last year. One was previously experienced air traffic controllers, which we were using to supplement ab initios because it takes us two years. How did we deal with that, versus the ab initio process? We will break it up into those two particular streams.

**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: 32**

**Departmental Question Number: SQ24-000030**

**Division/Agency Name: Agency - Airservices Australia**

**Hansard Reference: Spoken, Page No. 57 (12 February 2024)**

**Topic: Airservices – The number of applicants rejected after the change of recruitment guidelines**

**Senator Bridget McKenzie asked:**

Senator MCKENZIE: I've received information from a number of applicants who went through around six months of screening processes. In June last year you changed your guidelines and rejected some candidates. How many applications did this change affect?

Mr Harfield: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator MCKENZIE: But that is a fact: that it is six months of screening?

Mr Harfield: Usually, by the time we put people through aptitude testing and, after that testing, do interviews, it can take up to six months.

Senator MCKENZIE: Why were these applicants rejected without warning or explanation after going through that process?

Mr Harfield: I need to take that on notice. I don't have that information currently.

Senator MCKENZIE: Mr Curran, do you know?

Mr Curran: No, I don't know the specifics about the individuals who went through our screening process and at what stage they were—

Senator MCKENZIE: I don't want them identified. I do want to know, as part of due process and natural justice, why you change a process and they're all of a sudden kicked out.

Mr Harfield: There were two streams of intake last year. One was previously experienced air traffic controllers, which we were using to supplement ab initios because it takes us two years. How did we deal with that, versus the ab initio process? We will break it up into those two particular streams.

**Answer:**

A June 2023 review of the performance of air traffic control trainees who failed, and/or struggled significantly through the training, identified a potential correlation between training performance and performance on the cognitive tests forming part of the screening process.

To ensure that Airservices continued to meet the objective of selecting the candidates with the strongest likelihood of training success, the acceptance threshold for cognitive testing was reviewed and, in line with a recommendation from an independent review by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), a pass rate of 60th percentile for each of the 5 cognitive tests was established.

This change impacted 34 who had already been assessed and were in Airservices' talent pool awaiting an offer. Affected applicants were formally advised that due to the revised training assessment criteria, they were no longer eligible.

Following this change, Airservices has seen improved outcomes from candidates currently in training, who are performing at a higher level than previous cohorts.