

Question on notice no. 355

Portfolio question number: SQ25-002681

2025-26 Supplementary Budget estimates

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

Senator Bridget McKenzie: asked the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts on 12 December 2025—

(1. If multiple aviation-related buildings are demolished at an airport, does that trigger mandatory notification to the Department? If not, why not?

2. In the last 2-3 months, seven aviation buildings at Moorabbin Airport have been demolished and permanently removed. On what date did the Department first become aware that these buildings had been removed?

3. What oversight, if any, did the Department exercise over the removal of these buildings?

(a) Was any approval sought from the Department prior to demolition?

(b) If not, why not?

4. If the Department did not oversee or approve the removal, who does the Department understand to be the responsible authority for authorising or overseeing the demolition of aviation buildings at federally leased airports under the Airports Act 1996?

5. What is the Airport Building Controller required to report to the Department in cases where aviation buildings are demolished or permanently removed?

(a) Has the Airport Building Controller provided any such notification in relation to these seven buildings?

(b) If not, why not?

6. Clause 9.1 of the Moorabbin Airport Head Lease obliges the lessee to "keep and maintain the Airport Site including the Structures in good and substantial repair" and to be responsible for the condition, operation, repair and replacement of structures. On what basis does the Department consider the permanent removal of seven aviation buildings to be consistent with these obligations?

7. Is the Department aware that Moorabbin Airport Corporation is advertising the former building sites as available for lease, without any stated plan to replace the demolished aviation buildings?

(a) If so, on what date did the Department become aware of this?

(b) What engagement has the Department had with Moorabbin Airport Corporation on this issue?

8. What action is the Department taking to ensure that lessee companies of General Aviation airports comply with their Head Lease obligations in relation to:

(a) Maintaining airport structures

(b) Preserving aviation capacity

(c) Preventing the permanent loss of aviation assets?

9. Does the Department have any mechanism under the Airports Act 1996, the regulations, or the relevant Head Leases to prevent an airport leaseholder from permanently removing aviation buildings without replacing them?

(a) If so, identify those mechanisms.

(b) If not, how does the Department ensure aviation capability is not progressively eroded over time?

10. Does the Department agree that the permanent demolition and non-replacement of aviation buildings at a nationally significant General Aviation airport is inconsistent with the Commonwealth's stated commitment to protect General Aviation under the Aviation White Paper? If not, why not?

Answer —

Please see PDF attachment.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2025-2026

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Committee Question Number: 355

Departmental Question Number: SQ25-002681

Division/Agency Name: DIV - Domestic Aviation and Reform

Hansard Reference: Written (12 December 2025)

Topic: Demolition of buildings at Moorabbin Airport

Senator Bridget McKenzie asked:

1. If multiple aviation-related buildings are demolished at an airport, does that trigger mandatory notification to the Department? If not, why not?
2. In the last 2–3 months, seven aviation buildings at Moorabbin Airport have been demolished and permanently removed. On what date did the Department first become aware that these buildings had been removed?
3. What oversight, if any, did the Department exercise over the removal of these buildings?
a) Was any approval sought from the Department prior to demolition? b) If not, why not?
4. If the Department did not oversee or approve the removal, who does the Department understand to be the responsible authority for authorising or overseeing the demolition of aviation buildings at federally leased airports under the Airports Act 1996?
5. What is the Airport Building Controller required to report to the Department in cases where aviation buildings are demolished or permanently removed?
a) Has the Airport Building Controller provided any such notification in relation to these seven buildings?
b) If not, why not?
6. Clause 9.1 of the Moorabbin Airport Head Lease obliges the lessee to “keep and maintain the Airport Site including the Structures in good and substantial repair” and to be responsible for the condition, operation, repair and replacement of structures. On what basis does the Department consider the permanent removal of seven aviation buildings to be consistent with these obligations?
7. Is the Department aware that Moorabbin Airport Corporation is advertising the former building sites as available for lease, without any stated plan to replace the demolished aviation buildings?
a) If so, on what date did the Department become aware of this?
b) What engagement has the Department had with Moorabbin Airport Corporation on this issue?
8. What action is the Department taking to ensure that lessee companies of General Aviation airports comply with their Head Lease obligations in relation to:
a) Maintaining airport structures
b) Preserving aviation capacity
c) Preventing the permanent loss of aviation assets?
9. Does the Department have any mechanism under the Airports Act 1996, the regulations, or the relevant Head Leases to prevent an airport leaseholder from permanently removing aviation buildings without replacing them?
a) If so, identify those mechanisms.

b) If not, how does the Department ensure aviation capability is not progressively eroded over time?

10. Does the Department agree that the permanent demolition and non-replacement of aviation buildings at a nationally significant General Aviation airport is inconsistent with the Commonwealth's stated commitment to protect General Aviation under the Aviation White Paper? If not, why not?

Answer:

1. The demolition of buildings or other structures on leased federal airport sites requires demolition authorisation, which the proponent must submit to the Airport Building Controller (ABC) through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts' electronic lodgement facility. Under the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act), the demolition of a building is a building activity which requires an approval to be granted. An ABC must not approve a proposed building activity unless the ABC is satisfied the requirements under the Act and Airports (Building Control) Regulations 1996 have been met, including consistency of the proposed works with the in-force Master Plan for the airport. Aside from the demolition authorisation process, there is no requirement for the proponent to inform the department of a proposed demolition.
2. The department was aware that a number of structures at Moorabbin Airport would likely be close to the end of their useful life, as outlined on Page 134 of the 2021 Moorabbin Airport Master Plan which was approved 1 September 2023.
3. Refer to Question 1 response.
4. Under the Act, the Airport Lessee Company (ALC) is responsible for overseeing development and building activities at the airport it operates. The ABC provides approval for the demolition if the ALC consents to the activity.
5. The ABC is not required to inform the department on the demolition of buildings, as it is not a requirement under the Act.
6. The Airport Head Leases allows ALCs, subject to sub-clauses and relevant legislation and regulations, to construct, alter, remove, add to or demolish structures on the Airport site.
7. Primarily, subleases are commercial arrangements to be negotiated between the relevant ALC and sublessee, subject to any applicable laws, including any applicable State or Territory legislation. The department engages with Moorabbin Airport Corporations (MAC) on a regular basis about matters relating to the airport site.
8. To monitor compliance with the Airport Head Lease obligations, the department conducts Airport Head Lease and Compliance Reviews for all 21 federally leased airports, according to a 3-year rotating schedule. MAC had its Airport Head Lease and Compliance Review in 2023 and was deemed compliant, including with Clause 9.1 of the Airport Head Lease. MAC is scheduled for its next Head Lease and Compliance Review in 2026.
9. There are no mechanisms under the Act, the regulations, or the Airport Head Lease to prevent an airport leaseholder from permanently removing aviation buildings without replacing them if the building activity application is compliant and approval is granted by

an ABC. An ABC must not approve a proposed building activity unless the ABC is satisfied the requirements under the Act and Airports (Building Control) Regulations 1996 have been met, including consistency of the proposed works with the in-force Master Plan for the airport.

10. Consistent with the Aviation White Paper, airport master planning processes have regard to general aviation access at leased federal airports. The department continues to fulfil its function as a regulator, ensuring ALCs and future Master Plans are compliant with the Act.