

Question on notice no. 189

Portfolio question number: 252

2018-19 Budget estimates

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities Portfolio

Senator Nick McKim: asked the Airservices Australia on 22 May 2018—

Senator McKIM: Is it your contention that air traffic control staff at Hobart were also thoroughly consulted about the change?

Mr Harfield: The air traffic control staff would have been consulted in our normal change process that we do for any procedures or air route changes within the operation.

Senator McKIM: All of them? Does that include all air traffic controllers or a part?

Mr Harfield: Technically, they wouldn't be operating under their licence if they weren't deemed to be competent or understand the changes that they shouldn't be-

Senator McKIM: No, I'm asking about the consultation.

Mr Harfield: There's a normal change process that we have in the operations. That would have been carried out.

Senator McKIM: I'm asking: did that normal change process involve consulting all air traffic control staff at Hobart about the change?

Mr Harfield: It would depend on your definition of 'consultation'. I'm not trying to be-

CHAIR: Mr Harfield, it's a pretty simple question. You've got X number of air traffic controllers; you've got a change coming down the pike; you have processes of consultation. The senator's question is quite clear.

Mr Harfield: No, no. The thing is that they would be made aware of the change, and they would have-

CHAIR: That's not consultation. The burden of his question is consultation.

Mr Harfield: So they would have been made aware through our normal operational change processes, and they would have had the ability to object to the change or raise any issues that they had with the change, which is our normal process-

Senator McKIM: After the change had been made?

Mr Harfield: No, Senator. Our requirements are that we do a safety assessment and people have the ability to raise issues associated with that safety assessment, and that's our normal operational change process.

Senator McKIM: That includes all air traffic controllers in Hobart?

Mr Harfield: There is an ability for all controllers—the reason I'm saying that is that I can't say that all controllers were applied, but it's available to them. I'd have to take it on notice to find what the process actually was....

Mr Harfield: The normal process is that somebody from Hobart would have been involved in that.

CHAIR: There we go.

Senator McKIM: I understand that to be true, but 'somebody' is obviously nowhere near all of the control staff at Hobart. Perhaps I could just ask you to take on notice

how many of the air traffic control staff at Hobart were consulted and the nature of that consultation. Can you take that on notice?

Mr Harfield: Yes.

Answer —

All eight Hobart Tower controllers had an opportunity to provide input to the change. They were initially advised in July 2016 of the implementation of Hobart SID/STARs to take effect in September 2017. Regular updates were provided on the progress of the SID/STAR design, a feedback process was established and input was encouraged and captured.