

Question on notice no. 127

Portfolio question number: 127

2018-19 Additional estimates

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

Senator Rex Patrick: asked the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on 22 February 2019

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Senator PATRICK: Just so everyone is aware of what I've tabled, it's the Angel Flight flight request documentation. ACTING CHAIR: We're happy to table that. Senator PATRICK: Thank you. It has a fact sheet, instructions, guidelines for referrals, medical clearances, passenger guidelines, waivers and a release of liability. I'm informed-and I have no reason to doubt this-that, before you can jump on one of these flights as a person seeking to fly to Adelaide to have chemo, you also have to have watched a video that takes you through the process and talks you through the risks of what it is you're getting into. The duty of care thing is, in some sense, negated by the fact that you have someone who has had to sign up to a waiver, read through the fact sheet and watch a video. They're going in with eyes open. Mr Carmody: What the document doesn't say is that, in Angel Flight's case, for example, according to our statistics, there's a significantly higher risk of accident or incident flying with Angel Flight than flying privately. Senator PATRICK: I'm going to ask you to table evidence that grounds that statement. Mr Carmody: We have done our calculations, which have led us to our conclusion. I'm not sure that, even though we've done our work, everyone will agree with it. I'm quite happy to table it or quite happy to do it on notice. Senator PATRICK: That's fine.

Answer —

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has compared Community Service Flight (CSF) data with that for the private and business flying sector using material from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB).

CASA has undertaken this analysis separate to the ATSB investigation process. The data and analysis is not derived from the ATSB investigation, which is still in draft.

The greater accident rate of CSF raises the issue of managing the safe operation of these flights that may carry passengers unaware of the apparent elevated risk.

Assessment of the accident and incident rates for CSF and private/business/sports (excluding gliding) over the past 10 years (2008 to 2017) indicates:

- the CSF accident rate is 1.5 times higher than that for private/business/sports

- the CSF fatal accident rate is 5.4 times that for private/business/sports.

Attachment

Accident & Fatal Accident Rates for CFS and Private/Business/Sport (Excluding Gliding) 2008-2017 Based on ATSB and BITRE Data

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 2018 - 2019

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ACCIDENT & FATAL ACCIDENT RATES FOR CFS AND PRIVATE/BUSINESS/SPORT (EXCLUDING GLIDING) 2008-2017 BASED ON ATSB AND BITRE DATA

	Private/business/sport	CSF Provider
Total number of accidents	537	4*
Total number of fatal accidents	73	2*
Total flight hours	3,500,000	17,750
Annual average ATSB accident rate per million	153.43	225.4
Annual accident rate per 10,000 hours	1.53	2.25
Annual average ATSB fatal accident rate per million hours	20.86	112.7
Annual average ATSB fatal accident rate per 10,000 hours	0.21	1.13

*Major provider only. Second provider has had nil accidents.

As the volume of CSF activity in Australia is relatively low when compared with private and business flying activity, CASA has obtained a safety performance trend (i.e. incident and accident rate) over a longer period (10 years). To obtain accident and fatal accident rates for CSF for the period 2008-2017, a count of the volume of CSF activities and subsequent incidents and accidents was obtained from the BITRE's aircraft activity reports (2014 to 2017), as well as industry available data. BITRE has not yet published activity data for 2017 but made the information available to CASA. To develop a 10-year trend, the gap in CSF activity for 6 years from 2008 to 2013 was estimated using the annual average for CSF activity from 2014 to 2017 as the best available projection for the annual average. There are two CSF organisations in Australia arranging from which data can be drawn; a major provider which commenced in 2003 and a smaller one which began in 2013.

ATSB has informed CASA that there were 4 accidents from CSF operations, occurring in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2017. Accidents reported in 2011 and 2017 were fatal accidents; private/business/sports (excluding gliding) accident and activity data has been extracted from the ATSB Occurrence Statistics Report, including the number of incidents and accidents, the accident rates and the fatal accident rate.