Question no.: 140

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Use of 457 Visas
Proof Hansard Page: 105 (24 February 2015)

Senator Heffernan, Bill asked:

CHAIR: Do you use 457 visas?
Ms Staib: We have done, and we have some people on 457s.
CHAIR: Could you give us the details of those, on notice?
Ms Staib: Yes.

Answer:

Airservices has ten staff on 457 visas working across the business. Eight are employed in the Air Traffic Control business group and two are in the Projects and Engineering business group.

Question no.: 141

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Fire Engine Colour
Proof Hansard Page: 108 (24 February 2015)

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

Ms Staib: We have studied this and, based on American studies, lime green is the better colour to use—particularly when you are going through night and day. If you look around the ACT you will see that their fire vehicles are the same, colour.
…
Senator STERLE: Ms Staib, I am no expert on colours of fire engines—and, if you could provide that information to the committee, it would be very helpful—
Ms Staib: Yes

Answer:

Based on a number of safety related concerns raised about the visibility of vehicles in an Australian airport (airside) environment, Airservices initiated a review of the colour of its fire vehicles in 2008. At the time Airservices was aware that ACT Fire and Rescue and some countries including the USA had already changed the colour of airport fire vehicles to yellowish green to address similar concerns.

Airservices changed the colour of its fire vehicles to yellowish green based on research undertaken by the United States (US) Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) which identified that the yellowish green colour 'provides optimum visibility during a 24-hour day and under the variations of light as a result of weather and seasonal changes'.

One of the main advantages of the yellowish green colour over the red colour is that the fire vehicles are more readily identifiable over long distances, especially in reduced visibility conditions. This is a significant safety improvement when the vehicles are operating and responding to emergencies both on and off airports.

Since 2008 all new vehicles have been painted in the new yellowish green colour and Airservices has a programme to also repaint remaining red vehicles, which it expects to complete in 2016.

Since 2012 Airservices has also embarked on an improvement programme to ensure its fire vehicles are more readily identifiable as emergency service vehicles (especially when the vehicles are responding to off airport emergencies). This improvement programme includes a revised livery (vehicle markings) package for the fire vehicles and an extensive public awareness campaign designed to raise public awareness about Airservices fire vehicles.

Question no.: 142

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: TCU Decision
Proof Hansard Page: 109 (24 February 2015)

Senator Wong, Penny asked:

Senator WONG: But no decision was made to close the TCU?
Ms Staib: In 2011?
Senator WONG: Correct.
Ms Staib: No.
Senator WONG: Are you aware what led to the minister and the board—the board ultimately—determining not to proceed with the closure when it was previously attempted?
Ms Staib: I would have to go back and look at the records for that.

Answer:

As indicated on page 109 of Hansard, Airservices advises that there was no Board decision in 2011. It was noted by the Board at that time that future planning and investment in the national air traffic management system would need to take into account planning for the future operation of terminal control unit functions.

Question no.: 143

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Adelaide Terminal Control Unit (TCU) Closure
Proof Hansard Page: 110 (24 February 2015)

Senator Wong, Penny asked:

Senator WONG: When do you say the decision to close the Adelaide TCU was made?
Mr Rodwell: Only very recently.
Senator WONG: Can I have a date? It is a pretty big decision.
Ms Staib: It was at the December board meeting. I will get the exact date for you.
Senator WONG: Do you have minutes of that board meeting here?
Ms Staib: No.
Senator WONG: Well, I am requesting the minutes in relation to that decision.
Ms Staib: Yes, Senator

Answer:

The decision to integrate both the Adelaide and Cairns Terminal Control Units (TCUs) into Melbourne and Brisbane Air Traffic Service Centres (ATSCs) respectively was made by the Airservices Board at a meeting on 10 December 2014.

In making the decision, the minutes of the Board meeting noted that:

- consistent with the requirements of the Airservices Safety Management System, management had conducted a Safety Case and Reporting Determination (SCARD) for the integration of the Adelaide and Cairns TCUs into the Melbourne and Brisbane ATSCs and would now proceed with the development of a full safety case;
- preliminary hazard identification activity had been undertaken with no risks identified that would preclude the integration; and
- management had undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders, including staff and Civil Air, in connection with the integration.

Question no.: 144

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Informing Employees of TCU Closure
Proof Hansard Page: 110 (24 February 2015)

Senator Wong, Penny asked:

Senator WONG: Thank you. Subsequent to that decision, did you inform the employees?
Ms Staib: Yes, that is right.
Senator WONG: And you advised them by email, or CEO—sorry, what was your position again?
Ms Staib: I am the chief executive officer.
Senator WONG: Yes. Did you do a CEO note or something like that?
Ms Staib: There was extensive consultation—
Senator WONG: No, I have not asked that question. I will ask that question, but I am actually asking how you informed them of your decision.
Ms Staib: Of the board's decision?
Senator WONG: Correct.
Ms Staib: I would have to check that.
Senator WONG: Did you or did you not post a CEO message in which employees were informed, on 12 December?
Mr Hood: Each of the employees were advised by their line managers, both in Cairns and in Adelaide.
Senator WONG: When?
Mr Hood: I believe it was one or two days after the board meeting. I will confirm that on notice.
…
Senator WONG: Did you or did you not post a CEO message on 12 December in which you advised employees that a decision had been made to close the Adelaide TCU?
Ms Staib: I would have to go back and check the date, but I know we did release information after the board had considered the matter.
Senator WONG: I would like a copy of whatever correspondence you as CEO or another person in line management provided to employees to advise them of the decision. I want all communications with employees about this. Can you do that?
Ms Staib: Yes

Answer:

In addition to the extensive consultation that occurred with employees leading up to the decision, the following information was provided to employees notifying them of the Board decision of 10 December 2014:

- face-to-face briefings between senior air traffic control (ATC) managers and affected employees on 12 December 2014 in both Adelaide and Cairns (individual level);
- a video presentation by the Executive General Manager of Air Traffic Control to ATC staff nationally from 12 December 2014 (business group level); and
- an all staff notification through an electronic Chief Executive Officer message (Attachment A) which was sent as an email and posted to the intranet (all staff level) on 12 December 2014.

Attachment A – All staff notification through an electronic Chief Executive Officer message.

CEO Direct - 12 December 2014

Posted on December 12, 2014

As some of you may be aware, we have been considering options for the integration of the Terminal Control Units (TCU) and I would like to provide you with an update on that work.

Airservices has discussed at length a number of the options that have been under consideration and has decided to proceed with the integration of the Adelaide TCU into our Melbourne Centre and the Cairns TCU into our Brisbane Centre from 2017.

Safety is our number one priority. We have safely operated the TCUs for Canberra and the Gold Coast from Melbourne and Brisbane for more than 20 years.

Reaching this decision has been a long journey. This is another important step in helping to ensure we are well placed to meet the challenges of a 60 per cent increase in traffic over the next 15 years and for our future Civil Military Air Traffic System (CMATS).

The integration will see no job losses and no reduction in the number of air traffic controllers, control towers or level of service provided to the aviation industry. We are committed to retaining all controllers who wish to continue with Airservices.

This will also allow greater opportunity for staff development and career opportunities and allow us to improve operational efficiency and increase customer value.

We continue to explore alternate options for the Sydney TCU that take into account its complex and unique operating environment, including the introduction of the Western Sydney Airport and the transition to digital tower technology.

Sponsored by the ATC group, work will now commence following change management procedures to maintain the highest safety standards. We will ensure that all affected unions, staff and stakeholders are consulted throughout the project.

I would like to thank the staff in Adelaide, Cairns and Sydney TCUs for the professional and considered approach they have already demonstrated during our extensive consultation over the past few months.

More information has already been provided to those staff in the affected TCUs and will be provided to interested staff as the project progresses.

Margaret Staib
Chief Executive Officer

Question no.: 145

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Briefing Minister's Office and Members of Parliament of TCU closure decision
Proof Hansard Pages: 110-112 (24 February 2015)

Senator Wong, Penny asked:

Senator WONG: Thank you. At the point when the board made the decision, had you already consulted with the minister's office?
Ms Staib: Yes. Sorry: we consulted with the minister's office about the consideration, but it was up to the board to make the decision.
Senator WONG: But at the time the board made the decision, what contact in relation to the proposed closure of the Adelaide TCU had been made?
Ms Staib: With the minister's office?
Senator WONG: Yes, or the minister.
Ms Staib: We had briefed the minister's office—I would have to check the dates for you—along with a number of other members of parliament and senators. I would have to get those dates for you.
…
Senator WONG: Was it at the minister or his office's request that you briefed other MPs and senators?
Ms Staib: No. That was our undertaking.
Senator WONG: Who did you brief?
Ms Staib: I would have to get you the list. I can do that.
…
Senator WONG: Could I, on notice, get a full list of the parliamentarians briefed on this issue, by date, please.

Answer:

Extensive consultation occurred between Airservices and a range of stakeholders on the proposed integration of Terminal Control Units.

The Deputy Prime Minister and his office were briefed on the proposed integration at various stages between May and December 2014.

In June 2014, information was sent from Airservices to those Members of Parliament affected by the proposal, either due to their portfolio responsibilities or electorate location, and a detailed briefing offered.

These included:
- Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport;
- Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee members, including the Chair and Deputy Chair;
- Members of Parliament where the airport was located in their electorate; and
- other stakeholders including State and Local Government via the Community Aviation Consultation Groups.

Stakeholders were also notified by correspondence once the Board had made the decision in December 2014.

Question no.: 146

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Terms of Redundancies for TCU
Proof Hansard Page: 114 (24 February 2015)

Senator Wong, Penny asked:

Mr Hood: That is a guarantee that they would be able to remain in situ in Adelaide with a job at Airservices.
Senator WONG: At the same rate of pay?
Mr Hood: I cannot recall the details of that, but I am happy to take that on notice.
Senator WONG: Can you also—
Mr Hood: In all course events, we would maintain salary for those people.
Senator WONG: Can you, on notice, provide the details of what you say are the terms and conditions?
Mr Hood: Certainly.

Answer:

The following information has been provided to staff outlining the 'terms and conditions' or options available to staff following the Board decision to integrate both the Adelaide and Cairns Terminal Control Units into Melbourne and Brisbane respectively:

- there will be no job losses as a result of the co-location;
- there will be no reduction in the number of air traffic controllers, control towers or levels of service provided to the aviation industry;
- those staff currently providing terminal area control services in Adelaide and Cairns will be afforded the opportunity to undertake training such that they can continue their employment in the Adelaide and Cairns towers and therefore continue to reside in Adelaide or Cairns;
- those staff members who choose to move to Melbourne (from Adelaide) or Brisbane (from Cairns) will be accommodated;
- staff will also be offered the opportunity to relocate to any of the 28 locations across Australia where air traffic services are provided;
- controllers will be relocated or retrained in location in accordance with their personal preference and operational requirement;
- management will work closely with each staff member to explore the option that best suits the personal circumstances of each affected staff member;
- any change to the employment situation for staff in Adelaide or Cairns will be covered by conditions in the relevant Employee Agreement; and
- all affected air traffic controllers in Adelaide and Cairns have been guaranteed a job at the same level without a reduction in pay.

Question no.: 147

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: TCU Safety Case
Proof Hansard Pages: 115-116 (24 February 2015)

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Yes, thank you. Nothing like a vet giving you medical advice! I do not want any ketamine. I just want to go further to those questions raised by Senator Wong, Ms Staib. Has a safety case been prepared to CASA?
Ms Staib: It is currently being prepared.
Senator XENOPHON: Can you provide us with a copy of that case?
Ms Staib: When it is completed.

Answer:

For further details on the safety case see answer to question 143.

Question no.: 148

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: TCU Business Case
Proof Hansard Page: 116 (24 February 2015)

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Sure. Has Airservices prepared a business case regarding the move that justifies the proposed savings and the like?
Ms Staib: Yes, that is correct.
Senator XENOPHON: Has this been released publicly?
Ms Staib: No.
Senator XENOPHON: Why not?
Ms Staib: That is not our normal practice to do that, because it was a submission put to the exec and then to the board.
Senator XENOPHON: You are not suggesting it is commercial-in-confidence, are you?
Ms Staib: There are some commercial—but if you wish to see the business case I can furnish that for you.
…
Senator XENOPHON: Okay. So, on notice, could you provide that to the committee as a matter of urgency…

Answer:

The primary driver to integrate both the Adelaide and Cairns Terminal Control Units into Melbourne and Brisbane Air Traffic Service Centres respectively is to better position Airservices to address the challenges of aviation growth, including the forecast doubling of air traffic between now and 2030.

Through the smarter use of resources, including our people and technology, Airservices will enhance its operational capability needed to continue to deliver safe, efficient and resilient services to customers.

As part of this preparation for the future, Airservices is in the preliminary stages of implementing a new, harmonised Civil Military Air Traffic Management System (CMATS) with Defence. The business case for the integration includes consideration of procurement costs and requirements relating to the future CMATS which is currently in a commercially sensitive stage of negotiation.

The business case demonstrated a positive long term Net Present Value for integration of the Adelaide and Cairns Terminal Control Units to the Melbourne and Brisbane air traffic services respectively.

Question no.: 149

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: INTAS Ground Radar
Proof Hansard Page: 118 (24 February 2015)

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Senator XENOPHON: I am told that the ground controller, although very calm, advised that they had lost all information pertaining to aircraft movements. I want to find out whether that is true. Someone on the ground frequency asked, 'Was it INTAS again?' I presume that may have been one of the pilots speaking to the controller. The answer, I am informed, was 'Yes.' Can you confirm this, because I am getting a number of complains about INTAS. If this was a foggy night in Melbourne it potentially could have been quite a serious incident.
Mr Hood: If I can outline the circumstances. Firstly, I have not got the detail with me. I did not expect that to come as a question. But I am aware of the incident and I am happy to talk to it. Firstly, my understanding of the night in question is that there was thunderstorm activity and a number of aircraft taxiing in from the runway after landing were unable to reach their gate because, obviously, what happens in thunderstorms now is that ground handlers vacate the tarmac and you are left with several aircraft in stand-off bays that are unable to get in there. Sometimes you can be sitting on the aeroplane for more than an hour. I will confirm all of this on notice, because I do not have the details with me.
…
Mr Hood: My controllers did report it to me, because we did submit the ESIR event. So they did report it to me. In fact we have taken immediate action. Looking at the parameter of what happens, if it happens again, if there is another thunderstorm in Melbourne and they are taxiing in, and it is for longer than one hour, will the strip disappear? So we have taken action immediately, following the receipt of that event, to change—
Senator XENOPHON: I have a text message from somebody who was there that night saying, 'Crap, the storm had passed.' Could you just check that for me?
Mr Hood: Certainly.
Senator XENOPHON: I am just quoting the text message.
Mr Hood: I did not bring the details with me and I am happy to confirm it on notice. But we have taken action to change the system parameter for strips finishing to a five-hour period instead of a one-hour period.

Answer:

Airservices has confirmed that there was no compromise to safety during a severe weather event at Melbourne Airport on 13 February 2015.

A number of aircraft that had landed at Melbourne were unable to park for up to two hours due to the severe weather which required ground handlers to stand down during the storm. In addition, there were some network delays for flights bound for Sydney.

During this ground delay, air traffic controllers had the waiting aircraft in sight and on their ground radar screens at all times.

The extensive ground delay meant that the flight information labels on the controller's consoles, for aircraft awaiting a parking bay, automatically closed after one hour. This one hour parameter has now been reviewed and adjusted.

Question no.: 150

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Melbourne and Essendon Incident of 12 November 2013
Proof Hansard Pages: 119-120 (24 February 2015)

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Senator XENOPHON: I want to go to a specific incident that occurred on 12 November 2013. There were departures from Melbourne runway 16 and Essendon runway 26. I think Essendon is to the south of Melbourne airport. Is that correct?
…
Senator XENOPHON: The information I have is that this did not occur—that for a period of time no coordination was in effect. Can I put this to you. In their report dated 12 November 2013, Airservices reported the incident as a breakdown of communication. Is that correct?
Mr Hood: I do not have that with me but my understanding is that that is correct.
Senator XENOPHON: You may want to take some of this on notice because these are actually—
Mr Hood: If I can, that would be great, because that one was a fair while ago.
Senator XENOPHON: To the extent you can answer please do so. This report basically talks about a breakdown in communication, although the answer to question on notice No. 237 makes reference to approximately three hours having elapsed before the error was corrected, and I think we are talking about the same period. That is quite a significant period of time. The ATSB would have reviewed this report and noted the breakdown of communication and filed it, as would have CASA. Is that correct?
Mr Hood: That is correct.
Senator XENOPHON: Some time later a REPCON, which is the confidential reporting system for an issue involving a safety issue, was generated that said a loss of separation and separation assurance occurred. That is much more serious, isn't it? A breakdown in communication and a loss of separation and separation assurance is fundamentally much more serious than a breakdown of communication?
Mr Hood: It can be. We treat each of them as a serious incident. A breakdown in coordination can of course lead to something worse, and a breakdown of separation assurance can lead to something worse.
Senator XENOPHON: This may have to be the subject of a separate hearing, but the information I have received today is that the ATSB went back to Airservices and were again assured that it was a breakdown of communication that occurred. Can you confirm—
Mr Hood: I will take that on notice. It was a fair while ago. I am aware that the coordination between Essendon goes to the terminal area coordinator, which goes to the controller, which goes to the tower. So there are a number of links in that chain.
Senator XENOPHON: Sure, but this was a three-hour period when there was not only a breakdown in communication but there would have been a loss of separation or issues in respect of loss of separation.
Mr Hood: I will certainly look into that. I will take it on notice.
Senator XENOPHON: You could perhaps tell me how many take-offs and landings there were on those two runways at Essendon and Melbourne airports for that three-hour period.
Mr Hood: I will let you know that, too.
…
Senator XENOPHON: And God bless all of the people who keep talking to me. Airservices state that 'the provision of the other information requested is complex and would require a significant diversion of resources'. Do you remember that?
Mr Hood: No, I do not. As I said, I will take that on notice if I may.
Senator XENOPHON: Can I suggest to you that that is actually untrue. The information I have is that getting this information is less than six mouse clicks away. So could you please revisit that issue, because my information is that from multiple sources you could obtain this information very easily and Airservices purported statement that it is too complex and requires too many resources is not accurate at all.
Mr Hood: I will certainly look at that.

Answer:

See answer to question 156.

Question no.: 151

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: East Melbourne Aircraft Noise
Proof Hansard Page: 122 (24 February 2015)

Senator Rice, Janet asked:

Senator RICE: I want to talk about East Melbourne. I understand that the issue of aircraft noise over East Melbourne was raised with you in Senate estimates by my colleague Lee Rhiannon in 2013, and that Adam Bandt MP has made representations to you about this issue since 2013. I am interested to find out what Airservices Australia has done in this time to respond to the concern of East Melbourne residents?
Ms Staib: I will ask my colleague from corporate affairs to join me, just to amplify my answer and just in case you want further detail. My staff have met—I have not met with the member—and we have worked with him and some constituents to certainly explain how we manage noise and what processes are available to people to submit suggestions for improvement. I cannot recall, but it was several months ago when we did respond to that letter.
Ms Barton: I do not have the specifics of how we have addressed that issue, so I would need to take it on notice… Having said that though, we have implemented a number of initiatives in recent years in order to improve the way we are managing noise. Those initiatives include active participation in community forums in around 21 airports around Australia to ensure that we are consulting and receiving feedback from the community; using short-term trials in order to test out flight path changes where we can.
Senator RICE: Have you done those in East Melbourne?
Ms Barton: I do not have specifics of that. As I said, I will need to come back to you with specifics on East Melbourne.
Senator RICE: Perhaps if you have not got specific East Melbourne examples, let us not use up the time of the committee.
Ms Barton: I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Airservices provided comprehensive advice to the Member for Melbourne in 2013 and 2014 about this issue which concerns noise generated by light aircraft, particularly helicopters, moving around the Melbourne Cricket Ground and East Melbourne.

These operations are conducted outside controlled airspace, and are therefore not subject to air traffic control.

While Airservices has no direct responsibility for those operations, we facilitated discussions between the aircraft operators, Essendon Airport, the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and other stakeholders to ensure that the noise sensitivities were understood by all parties.

Question no.: 152

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Flights in East Melbourne
Proof Hansard Page: 122 (24 February 2015)

Senator Rice, Janet asked:

Senator RICE: Does Airservices Australia monitor the number of flights in the East Melbourne area?
Ms Barton: We monitor all flights and we record that information.
Senator RICE: Can you tell us how many flights there and the increase in flights over a period of time, say, over the last 10 years?
Ms Barton: We can absolutely provide that information, so I will take that on notice.
Senator RICE: What noise monitoring has Airservices Australia conducted in East Melbourne?
Ms Barton: Again, I would need to take on notice specifically about what is happening in East Melbourne.
Senator RICE: So you do not know.
Ms Barton: I do not have that information to hand.

Answer:

Airservices has extracted data from the Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System and filtered flights within a 1.5 km radius from the centre of the Melbourne Cricket Ground to a height of 2000 feet. The data shows that there is a seasonal variation, which also appears to be linked to tourism and sporting events at the MCG. We have chosen two representative months to cover summer and winter. In January 2005 there were 721 flights and in January 2015 there were 1060 flights. In July 2005 there were 596 flights compared with 631 flights in July 2014.

The majority of movements captured by the filter were from general aviation and helicopters with minimal flight plan information as these operations are conducted outside controlled airspace, and are therefore not subject to air traffic control.

The response to question 154 provides further detail on Airservices' role with respect to flights that are not managed by air traffic control.

Question no.: 153

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: CIRRUS Operation during Incident of 12 November 2013
Proof Hansard Page: 123 (24 February 2015)

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Senator XENOPHON: Can I follow on with the line of questioning in respect of the incident on 12 November. I have got a copy of this document from your website. Is it Cirrus?
Mr Hood: Yes, Cirrus.
Senator XENOPHON: Just looking at it, maybe I have misread it. There does not appear to be any mention there of the three-hour period when this occurred when not only was there a breakdown in communication but, arguably, loss of separation, given what occurred. Can you take that on notice? I do not see any reference to that. If there is no mention of the time in this seminal report, as distinct from what was answered on notice, I would have thought that CASA and the ATSB would have taken much more interest in it if it was a three-hour time period. How many aircraft movements can you have out of Melbourne Airport—one a minute?
Mr Hood: Probably up to 60 or so, depending on which runway and the configuration.
Senator XENOPHON: Sixty an hour? If it is a three-hour period we are potentially looking at up to 180.
Mr Hood: Sixty in a three-hour period—20 or so departures per hour.
Senator XENOPHON: So if you are looking at 60 and if you are looking at major passenger aircraft you are looking at a number of thousand passengers that may have been on the deck.
Mr Hood: I am happy to take that on notice, Senator.

Answer:

See answer to question 156.

Question no.: 154

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Aircraft noise
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Rice, Janet asked:

Does Airservices Australia have a process or approach for exploring new or additional regulatory options regarding aircraft noise?

Answer:

There a number of Federal, State and Local Government agencies, as well as industry stakeholders, who are responsible for aircraft noise management. Although Airservices is not responsible for the policy or regulatory aspects of aircraft noise management, Airservices does take an active role in working together with communities and other stakeholders to identify practical opportunities to minimise aircraft noise impacts.

Question no.: 155

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: INTAS Technology
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

1. Noting that Airservices has entered into a further contract to install INTAS technology in more Control Towers, is there a provision in the contract for Airservices customers to be compensated for any extra expenses incurred as a result of a similar number of defects/failures being encountered as occurred at Rockhampton, Broome, Adelaide and Melbourne? If so, does the contract stipulate that the contractor shares Airservices compensation risk?
2. In terms of its answers to QoN #245 (Budget Estimates May 2014) can Airservices Australia provide an update on the number (if any) of additional INTAS issues beyond the already reported 2,467 that have occurred at Rockhampton, Broome, Adelaide & Melbourne Towers and how many remain outstanding?

Answer:

1. In our new agreement Airservices has enhanced the provisions regarding contractor and system performance. Specifically, service credits are deducted from quarterly support payments if:
    *   system availability does not meet targets;
    *   defects are not rectified with specific timescales that depend on priority;
    *   software deliveries contain more than a predetermined percentage of defects; and
    *   the total number of uncorrected defects exceeds a threshold.

    There are no specific provisions for Airservices customers to be compensated as they do not directly incur any additional costs.

2. The number of reported issues for Rockhampton, Broome, Adelaide & Melbourne Towers, between 18 June 2014 and 12 March 2015 is 1394. These issues range from defects to system enhancement requests submitted by controllers and technical staff, and documentation updates.

    The number of issues that remain outstanding at 16 March 2015 is 453 across all sites. Of these issues approximately 88% relate to efficiency matters, 7% to documentation updates, 4% to cosmetic or functions not used in service, and 1% to service delivery or safety considerations. Airservices continues to work with the supplier of INTAS to action remaining issues in a timely manner and to complete agreed system enhancements requested by controllers. The system continues to operate safely.

Question no.: 156

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: CIRRIS Report
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon, Nick asked:

Cirrus #ATS-0125061 states that the ML TAC received coordination from Essendon Tower that it was unable to separate its Runway 26 aircraft from Melbourne's departures but the ML TAC did not subsequently pass the coordination to the Melbourne approach controller. LOA_3263 para 4.5.3 (as provided in answer to QoN 237) indicates that a number of parties have responsibilities when Melbourne is using Runway 16 for departures and Essendon Tower is unable to separate its Runway 26 instrument approach from the Melbourne departures:

1. What is the "MPL" and what relationship does it have to the ML TAC?
2. What is the "MLC" and what relationship does it have to the ML TAC?
3. What is the "MAE" and what relationship does it have to the ML TAC?
4. What is the "MLA" and what relationship does it have to the ML TAC?
5. Did Melbourne Tower receive coordination that Essendon Tower was unable to separate its Runway 26 instrument approach aircraft prior to further Melbourne departures being approved (i.e. the provisions of LOA is the 3263 para 4.5.3 (3) had become effective)?
6. What event occurred that triggered the detection of the breakdown of communication some 3 hours prior?
7. Can Airservices provide a copy of the radar tapes it gave ATSB regarding this incident?
8. Can Airservices explain why the provision of the radar tapes requested in QoN #237 (5) is complex and would require a significant diversion of resources?
9. Can Airservices explain why the provision of the relevant Essendon Tower, Melbourne Tower and Melbourne Approach Airways Operation Journal entries for the incident is complex and would require a significant diversion of resources?

Answer:

As noted in Airservices response to QoN 237 from October 2014, this incident related to a breakdown of communication where a documented procedure was not correctly followed.

The Melbourne Terminal Area Coordinator was advised that weather conditions at Essendon had deteriorated to a level where Essendon Tower would not be able to visually separate aircraft in the event that there was a missed approach (go around) by an arrival to Runway 26 at Essendon at the same time as a departure or missed approach from Runway 16 at Melbourne, but did not communicate that to Melbourne approach controllers.

In this type of weather scenario, Melbourne Approach controllers would normally sequence Runway 26 arrivals for Essendon with additional spacing from Runway 16 departures at Melbourne and also Runway 16 arrivals to account for the possibility of a missed approach.

Air traffic systems are designed with many layers of defence to ensure that in the rare cases where errors are made, these are detected and recovered. While the breakdown of communication did not cause any loss of separation to occur, the event did highlight an opportunity for making the system safer which has been acted upon.

Despite the breakdown in communication, additional coordination requirements were in place and were effective, which ensured that safety was not compromised:

i)   Melbourne Tower was using an operating mode where normal departures were off Runway 27 and not off Runway 16. This required every 16 departure (referred to as an 'off mode' departure) to be individually coordinated with Essendon Tower. This coordination would have identified any potential conflict between an Essendon and Melbourne flight and would have resulted in a separation strategy being agreed upon. This requirement is outlined in the LOA.

ii) If there had been an unexpected missed approach by an aircraft landing on Runway 16 at Melbourne (and there were none during the period in question), that would also have required coordination from Melbourne Tower directly to Essendon Tower to agree upon a resolution. This requirement is outlined in the LOA.

The event that triggered the breakdown of communication being detected was an 'off mode' departure from Melbourne being identified as a potential conflict with an arrival to Runway 26 at Essendon during one of these coordination events between Melbourne and Essendon Tower. There were a total of six arrivals for Runway 26 at Essendon during the period in question.

With respect to roles, Melbourne Planner (MPL), Melbourne Approach East and Melbourne Terminal Area Coordinator (ML TAC) are air traffic control positions in the Melbourne Terminal Control Unit. ML TAC and MPL are sometimes combined. Melbourne Tower Coordinator and Melbourne Tower Aerodrome Controller are air traffic control position in the Melbourne Tower.

The incident was reported and reviewed in accordance with Airservices normal safety management processes which also include routine notification to both the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA).

As outlined in Airservices' responses to Questions on Notice from October 2014 (and Airservices' response to the REPCON), an interim system enhancement was implemented while coordination procedures were reviewed to look for further opportunities for improvement. An enhancement to local documentation to reinforce coordination requirements was subsequently identified and implemented in 2013.

Neither the ATSB nor CASA considered any further action was required in relation to this event.

Question no.: 157

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Sydney Airport Relationship Management
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

1. Is there a staff member dedicated to managing the Airservices Australia relationship with Sydney Airport?
2. If yes, what is their title, and where do they sit in the reporting structure? Which other customers do they manage?
3. If none, what other customers have a dedicated staff member? If none, why Sydney Airport?

Answer:

Airservices has a national airport relations function within the Corporate and Industry Affairs Group. Aviation relationship managers are located in Perth, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra. These managers are responsible for engaging with all airports in their region (this includes metropolitan and regional locations), as well as with airline operators in those locations to ensure that Airservices is meeting the needs of its stakeholders.

Question no.: 158

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Sydney Airport Curfew Flights
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

1. Please list the type of aircraft that have landed at Sydney Airport between 11pm and 6am since (date).
2. What impact on flight numbers has the change in types of aircraft permitted to land at Sydney Airport?

Answer:

1. The types of aircraft that have landed at Sydney Airport between 11pm and 6am in the period from 13 February 2015 (when the regulatory changes took effect) to 16 March 2015 are as set out below. This list includes not only flights authorised under the amended instrument but also flights permitted to operate during the curfew period under other provisions, which have not changed.

Type of Aircraft	
A332	Airbus A330-200A332
AT76	ATR 72-600
B350	Beechcraft King Air 350
B461	Bae 146-100
B463	Bae 146-300
B738	Boeing 737-800
B744	Boeing 747-400
B77W	Boeing 777-300ER
BE20	Beechcraft King Air 200
BE58	Beechcraft Baron BE58
C25A	Cessna Citation CJ2
C441	Cessna Conquest 441
C525	Cessna Citation 525
C550	Cessna Citation 550
C680	Cessna Citation Sovereign C680
F70	Fokker 70
F900	Dassault Falcon 900
GLF4	Gulfstream 4 (IV)
GLF5	Gulfstream 5 (V)

2. Given the short period of time the amended regulations have been in place, it is difficult to provide an accurate assessment of the impact the changes have had on flight numbers.

   For the period from 13 February to 16 March 2015 (i.e. 31 days from when the regulations changed at Sydney), 241 flights landed at Sydney Airport between the hours of 11pm and 6am.

   For the period from 13 January to 12 February 2015 (i.e. 31 days prior to when the regulations changed at Sydney), 274 flights landed at Sydney Airport between the hours of 11pm and 6am.

Question no.: 159

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Adelaide Airport Curfew Flights
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

1. Please list the type of aircraft that have landed at Adelaide Airport between 11pm and 6am since (date).
2. What impact on flight numbers has the change in types of aircraft permitted to land at Adelaide Airport?

Answer:

1. The types of aircraft that landed at Adelaide Airport between 11pm and 6am for the period 18 December 2014 (when the regulatory changes took effect) to 16 March 2015 are set out below. This list includes not only flights permitted under the amended regulations but also flights that were permitted to operate during the curfew period under other provisions, which have not changed.

Type of Aircraft	
A320	Airbus A320-200
AT43	ATR-42-300
B190	Beechcraft 1900D
B412	Bell 412 (heli)
B461	British Aerospace Bae146-100
B463	British Aerospace Bae146-300
B733	Boeing 737-300
B734	Boeing 737-400
B77W	Boeing 777-300ER
BE20	Beechcraft King Air 200
BK17	BK117 (heli)
C172	Cessna 172 Skylane
C402	Cessna 402
C404	Cessna 404
C441	Cessna 441 Conquest
C560	Cessna Citation 560
C680	Citation Sovereign C680
E135	Eurocopter EC135 (heli)
EC30	Eurocopter EC130 (heli)
F50	Fokker 50
F900	Dassualt Falcon 900
GLF4	Gulfstream 4 (IV)
H25B	Hawker Beechcraft 125

LJ35	Learjet 35
LJ45	Learjet 45
PA34	Piper Seneca PA34
PC12	Pilatus PC-12
SF34	Saab 340
SW4	Fairchild Swearingen Metroliner

2. Given the short period of time the amended regulations have been in place, it is difficult to provide an accurate assessment of the impact the changes have had on flight numbers.

    For the period from 18 December 2014 to 16 March 2015 (i.e. 88 days from when the regulations changed at Adelaide), 995 flights land at Adelaide airport between the hours of 11pm and 6am.

    For the period from 21 September 2014 to 17 December (i.e. 88 days prior to when the regulations changed at Adelaide), 1018 flights land at Adelaide airport between the hours of 11pm and 6am.

Question no.: 160

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Harper Review
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

The Department of I&RD submission notes the Review says that Airservices charges should be a focus for review.
1. Has Airservices taken note of these comments?
2. What does Airservices say about its charging?
3. How does Airservices ensure that it is providing a service at reasonable cost to airlines and passengers?

Answer:

Airservices has noted the comment made in the submission by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development which disagreed with the recommendation on the basis that Airservices charges are already reviewed during the Long Term Pricing Agreement (LTPA) process. Charges for services are set under a five year LTPA which is agreed by industry and overseen by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). Through the consultation of industry and the ACCC in the calculation of the LTPA, Airservices is confident that costs to airlines are reasonable.

Through the LTPA, which provides price certainty in the five years to 2016, Airservices has delivered real term price reductions of 11 percent whilst supporting aviation activity growth of almost 20 percent.

In addition to this, Airservices is always seeking opportunities to reduce costs for customers where possible. An example of this is a recent initiative known as Metron Harmony. An independent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia has found that this initiative has delivered annual fuel cost savings to airlines estimated at $18.2 million by reducing airborne delay time by an average of 1.1 minute per flight arriving at Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane airports in 2014.