

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 159

Program: N/A

Division/Agency: (AMSA) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Topic: Marine Order Part 3

Proof Hansard Page/s: 110-111 (23/05/12)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: Thanks, Chair. Mr Peachey, welcome. There have been concerns raised with me about the transparency of the AMSA process in its consultation about draft Marine Orders Part 3, issue 7. Do you know how many submissions AMSA received during its Marine Orders Part 3 consultation period?

Mr Peachey: We received 202 written submissions.

Senator WILLIAMS: In the break-up of those submissions, do you know how many were from companies?

Mr Kinley: We will have to take that on notice.

Senator WILLIAMS: Do you know how many submissions were from other organisations? Can you take that on notice?

Mr Kinley: I can take that on notice. All I can tell you at this stage is that 180 were from individual seafarers.

Senator WILLIAMS: That was my next question. One hundred and eighty from individual seafarers?

Mr Kinley: Yes, largely from one particular union.

Senator WILLIAMS: How many submissions were received through the AMSA MO3 consultation webpage? Did you get many through your webpage?

Mr Kinley: We will take that on notice.

Senator WILLIAMS: The AMSA webpage submission options include a question asking if the author wished the submission to be private. How many of the persons or organisations requested privacy?

Mr Kinley: We will take that one on notice.

Senator WILLIAMS: How many of the persons or organisations indicated that their submissions were public? Do you want to take that on notice as well?

Mr Kinley: Yes.

Senator WILLIAMS: Would you have any idea of how many submissions were received from government departments?

Mr Kinley: None that I am aware of, but I will check on that.

Answer:

8 submissions were received from ship owners/operators.

6 submissions were received from unions/associations.

198 submissions were received via the AMSA website and dedicated email address.

52 submissions were received in which they requested their comments and details to remain confidential.

1 submission was received from a Government Department, that being the Maritime Safety Authority Tasmania.

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Question no.: 160

Program: N/A

Division/Agency: (AMSA) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Topic: Suspected Irregular Entry Vessels (SIEV's)

Proof Hansard Page/s: 112 (23/05/12)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH: How many times has Ian Rintoul, a member of the Refugee Action Coalition, or any members of the Australian United Hazara Association contacted AMSA to inform them of people-smuggling operations or boats either in distress or otherwise? (*Question 1.*)

Mr Young: I do not have an answer to that question. That requires some research. Could I take it on notice?

Senator NASH: That would be great. I expect you could take this question on notice as well: if anybody from the association itself, apart from that gentleman, has? (*Question 2.*)

Mr Young: Yes.

Senator NASH: Thank you. Could you also take on notice how many times AMSA has received calls from organisations such as that? (*Question 3.*) I suspect these will need to be on notice too. If any of these people or organisations have contacted AMSA about illegal boats, in what circumstances is that communication made? By that, I mean are the calls received before or after the boats are intercepted or before or after they have arrived in Australian waters? (*Question 4.*) Also, how many reports from any of these individuals or groups about vessels needing assistance have actually required the assistance of Australian authorities to secure life onboard illegal vessels? (*Question 5.*) Again, I am expecting you to take these on notice. Also, have you reported the calls to the AFP, and if not, why not? (*Question 6.*) If you could take those on notice, that would be useful.

Mr Young: Certainly.

Answers:

AMSA has reviewed search and rescue incident records only back to 1 July 2011 as the process is arduous, requiring a thorough reading of individual files to identify details sought by Senator Nash, rather than a simple examination of statistics.

There were 33 search and rescue incidents relevant to the Senator's questions. In all cases the nature of the contact was to provide information on vessels that might be in distress.

1. AMSA is aware of only one incident in which Mr Rintoul was specifically identified as contacting AMSA.
2. Additional telephone calls were received by AMSA in which persons other than Mr Rintoul identified themselves as being from either the Refugee Advocacy Centre or the Hazara Assistance Group.
3. In 28 of the 33 incidents AMSA was contacted by concerned members of the public. These persons may have been members of refugee advocacy organisations but they did not specifically identify themselves as being so during the contact with AMSA.

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4. All communications occurred before the vessels were intercepted. Twenty three incidents were inside the Australian search and rescue region and ten were in Indonesia's search and rescue region.
5. All incidents have attracted assistance. The type of assistance delivered depended on the circumstances.
6. No, because the Australian Federal Police was not a relevant authority for search and rescue purposes in these incidents.

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Question no.: 161

Program: N/A

Division/Agency: (AMSA) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Topic: First Aid Kits for Vessels

Proof Hansard Page/s: 113 (23/05/12)

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: I have had some inquiry in relation to the requirements of first-aid kits across different levels of vessels under the harmonised OH&S guidelines. Is there any scale of those or is there the same sort of requirement across all sorts of vessel types? Could you break that down for me?

Mr Kinley: Under the Navigation Act at the moment there are requirements for first-aid supplies and equipment for large ships. There are some requirements under the National Standard for Commercial Vessels.

Senator COLBECK: Does that come under your responsibility?

Mr Kinley: It will do from 1 January next year. I am not aware of any issues surrounding the interaction of those standards with the harmonised workplace health and safety laws. I would have to get back to you on that one.

Answer:

Medical supplies for vessels subject to the *Navigation Act 1912* are governed by Marine Order Part 10 – Medical First Aid on Ships. Additionally, Marine Order Part 25 also prescribes the requirements for recommended first aid kits for use in lifeboats, life-rafts and rescue boats.

Under the National Law which will apply from 1 January 2013 to vessels operating domestically, General Safety Duties are prescribed in very general terms and do not specify particular equipment requirements. The National Law requirements are intended to operate concurrently with State occupational health and safety laws.

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Question no.: 162

Program: N/A

Division/Agency: (AMSA) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Topic: Eddystone Lighthouse

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator PARRY asked:

1. I understand that the first order main light at Eddystone Point was switched off in 2011. Can you tell me what light now operates there?
2. What were the reasons for this change from the strong light to the small beacon?
3. What community consultation was undertaken before this decision was made?
4. Are you able to outline the AMSA's future plans for the Eddystone Point Lighthouse?
5. Is it accepted that there is still a need for such a light on this treacherous part of the coast?
6. Would smaller vessels, for example, those sailing during Sydney to Hobart and the Three Peaks boat races – rely on the Eddystone Point Lighthouse for safety?

Answer:

1. AMSA is currently operating a self-contained rotating light beacon mounted on the balcony of the lighthouse.
2. The purpose of the trial is to see whether the reduced intensity light will mitigate a bird strike problem. Previously, a large number of shearwaters (mutton birds) have been found dead in and around the lighthouse during the annual migration season (November to May).
3. AMSA consulted with its commercial shipping stakeholders through the Navigational Services Advisory Group on the safety aspects of changing the light source. AMSA also consulted the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service and the indigenous landholders about the cultural and environmental aspects of the bird strike problem.
4. AMSA will continue to evaluate the performance and impact of the temporary beacon during 2012/13 through engaging appropriate expertise to evaluate a full mutton bird migration period. At the end of the trial, AMSA will select the most appropriate optical apparatus for operating the light at Eddystone Point, which may include continuing to use the traditional light and lens.
5. The lighthouse at Eddystone Point forms part of AMSA's national network of aids to navigation. In considering the bird strike issue AMSA determined that there was a need to maintain an aid to navigation at Eddystone Point for the safe navigation of commercial shipping but that the range of the light could be safely reduced from 26 nautical miles to 20 nautical miles.
6. Aids to navigation specifically required to assist fishing vessels and recreational vessels are the responsibility of State governments. However, these vessels are able to use the navigational facilities provided by AMSA, including when navigating in the vicinity of Eddystone Point.

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Question no.: 163

Program: N/A

Division/Agency: (AMSA) Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Topic: Regulations

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

1. Does Malcolm Larsen, who is in charge of Marine Order 3, have any marine qualifications?
2. Is it correct that three year cadetships have now been reduced to 12 months cadetship?
3. Does AMSA accept that downgraded standards could lead to more maritime incidents?

Answer:

1. Malcolm Larsen is not in charge of Marine Order Part 3.
2. No.
3. AMSA does not accept that standards are being downgraded.