

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 01

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Tender for Fire Rescue Services – Townsville Airport

Hansard Page: 77 (21/10/08)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—That is what I thought it was, but I am assured that the real estate has been excised off for the facilities that service the civil side. I understand that Delta have won the tender to provide services for the civil side; in fact, I think you would realise that Delta is now the owner of the civil side.

Mr Russell—Yes. I do not think there was a tender for the civil side. In a sense, that just further complicates the issue.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I understood that the tender went out on an open tender basis. At that time Delta was not owned by the owner, but it is now.

Mr Russell—I certainly agree that it is owned by Queensland Airports.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Yes, but I think initially there was an open tender process. You do not think that is the case?

Mr Russell—I do not believe so, no.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could you just check that for me?

Mr Russell—Yes, of course.

Answer:

Airservices Australia has advised that it does not consider that any competitive tender process has been carried out for the provision of Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) services at Townsville Airport.

Airservices commenced providing ARFF services at Townsville in January 2005 as part of an initial 5-year arrangement with the Department of Defence. This was supported by a Services Agreement that also allows Airservices to operate from Defence's fire station pending the construction of a new station on the civilian side of the airport by the airport operator, Townsville Airport Proprietary Limited (TAPL).

On 27 September 2006, TAPL requested Airservices to submit a proposal for providing a fire service, including the specification of capability and pricing, and sought Airservices' agreement to lease fire station facilities at an annual rental. Airservices responded to the request.

On 25 January 2007, TAPL advised that it was exploring an option to engage an alternative to Airservices for the provision of ARFF services, after which no further discussions were held with Airservices on the matter.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 02

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Air Traffic Controllers – Absenteeism
Hansard Page: 84 (21/10/08)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—Across the country in 2007-08, there was an average of 15.57 unplanned absent days per controller—I realise that it is a stressful and very important job and they do a fantastic job et cetera— Melbourne and Brisbane airports, however, had 17 and 20 respectively. Why do Melbourne and Brisbane have significantly higher levels of absenteeism with their controllers? Is it the weather or the grog?

CHAIR—It is on notice, Senator Heffernan.

Mr Russell—I think I will take that, if you would not mind, Chairman.

CHAIR—Senator Heffernan, do you have any more questions?

Senator HEFFERNAN—Yes, I have a couple on carbon footprints. With reference to question on notice No. 8 from 28 May and the Energetics audit on Airservices Australia's carbon footprint, to which it referred, what was the cost of the audit?

Mr Russell—I will ask Mr Dudley, who is the—

CHAIR—That is on notice.

Mr Russell—Thank you.

Senator HEFFERNAN—I did not put it on notice, did I?

CHAIR—Senator Williams has some questions. You did say that you would put some questions on notice.

Senator WILLIAMS—I do not mind Senator Heffernan having a go.

CHAIR—So they are not on notice now, Senator Heffernan?

Mr Russell—I am happy to take questions on notice.

Senator HEFFERNAN—Yes, take that on notice.

Mr Russell—I am quite happy to do that.

Answer:

Part A (ATC Absenteeism)

Airservices Australia has advised that there are no specific factors that can be attributed to the higher levels of absences at Melbourne and Brisbane.

Part B (Energetics Audit)

\$48,000.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 03

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Tender for Fire Rescue Services – Townsville Airport

Hansard Pages: 85-86 (21/10/08)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I will digress slightly and finish on the matter that I was talking to you about before. I understand that the Townsville airport asked for Airservices to put in a quote, a tender or an expression of interest for the work and that Airservices did not respond or did not respond positively. I just ask that on notice in view of what you said before. Could you just check whether that is right?

Mr Russell—I am happy to do that. There were some discussions with the Townsville airport operators going back some years, and I am very happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

Please refer to Airservices Australia's response to Question No. AA 01.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 04

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Energetics' Audit Report – Recommendations

Hansard Page: 87 (21/10/08)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—If Airservices Australia plans to go carbon neutral, how will it fund the alleged cost of half a million dollars? Where is that half a million dollars coming from?

Mr Russell—I might ask Richard Dudley, who is responsible for this area, to comment.

Mr Dudley—We are not only investigating the recommendations coming out of the Energetics report but also keeping a close monitor on decisions of government, particularly those pertaining to the Garnaut review and also the climate change white paper coming through. There are also implications for the organisation potentially from the interdepartmental committee on sustainability. So those three, in concert with the Energetics findings, we will wrap up and present to our board towards the end of this year in relation to a program moving forward to achieve those sorts of goals.

Senator HEFFERNAN—Best of luck with that. But will you give an assurance that that will not divert funds from your core functions, however you are funded?

Mr Dudley—In terms of our core operations?

Senator HEFFERNAN—Yes.

Mr Dudley—No, it will not impact on our core operations.

Senator HEFFERNAN—So you will report back on how you will—

Mr Dudley—I will be happy to.

Senator HEFFERNAN—Does the government plan to increase the budget to cover the cost? I will give you these questions on notice.

Mr Dudley—I am happy to take them on notice.

Answer:

Airservices Australia's revenue is derived from charges agreed with industry for services and it receives no Government Budget appropriations.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 05

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Airservices Australia – Staff Absenteeism

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Airservices Australia (AA) has had significant problems with staff absenteeism.

1. Is this trend increasing or decreasing?
2. Has AA reviewed its leave policies?
3. Does AA believe that this problem is caused by, and may be resolved by addressing, staffing issues?

Answer:

Airservices Australia has advised that:

1. The trend has remained static over the last 12 months.
2. The overall leave policy, incorporating sick leave, is currently under review.
3. It does not consider issues relating to air traffic control staff numbers and absenteeism are directly linked.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 06

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Monitoring of International Airspace
Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I understand from an interview that I heard with Minister Anthony Albanese that Airservices Australia (AA) monitors international airspace from the ICAO.

1. How much international airspace does AA monitor?
2. How many Air Traffic Controllers are allocated to such roles?
3. Does this detract from the amount of airspace monitored within Australia?

Answer:

Airservices Australia has provided the following response:

1. Airservices Australia manages the international airspace outside the 12 nautical mile territorial limit within the Australian Flight Information Region on behalf of ICAO. On behalf of the respective Governments, Airservices Australia also manages the upper airspace (between 24,500 and 60,000 feet) of both Solomon Islands and Nauru.
2. Individual air traffic controllers are not allocated exclusively to these airspace areas and the function is combined with existing roles.
3. No, as stated above the management of this airspace is combined within existing functions.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 07

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Civil Air and Airservices Australia Dispute

Hansard Page/s: Written question

Senator Heffernan asked:

The substance of the dispute between Civil Air and Airservices Australia (AA) appear to be, at least from Civil Air's perspective, a matter of excessive overtime.

1. Could AA provide a breakdown of how many hours of overtime has been worked in total, and per controller, over a period of the last 6 months?
2. Have the parties made progress towards a resolution of this dispute?
3. Has any agreement to mediation been made?

Answer:

Airservices Australia has provided the following response:

1. The total overtime worked in the last six months is 43,469 hours which, on average equates to 46 hours per controller or 1 shift per month per controller.
2. The matter of what constitutes 'reasonable overtime' is scheduled to be heard in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 15-16 December 2008.
3. No.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. AA 08

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Airservices Australia – Staffing Issues
Hansard Page/s: Written question

Senator Barnett asked:

1. How many staff (full-time and part-time) have been employed as Air Traffic Controllers at Launceston airport over last 3 years? (average figures please or as at a set date in each year, as appropriate)
2. How many sick days / absentee days have these staff taken over the last 3 years, up to the present time. (annual average figures and/or cumulative to current time)
3. What effect have staff absenteeism levels had on operations?
4. What is the optimum number of ATC staff at the Launceston airport?
5. What are the current hours of operation for the control tower at the Launceston Airport?
6. Have there been any incidents of concern relating to ATC operations at Launceston Airport over the last 3 years? (by the word 'incidents', the intended meaning is events that were considered to be unsafe or a breach of normal operations or outside normal safety parameters?)
7. If so, how many incidents have there been?
8. If there have been incidents, what inquiries have there been into these incidents and what have been the results of those enquiries? Who conducted the enquiries?
9. Were recommendations made, and if so, were they implemented?
10. Who considered the inquiries / recommendations and who made the decisions on what action should be taken?
11. Has there been any evidence to suggest that staffing levels, hours of operation or staff absentee levels have contributed to the safety of ATC operations at the Launceston Airport?

Answer:

Airservices Australia has provided the following response:

1. Five (3-year average).
2. Total 243 days for the last 3 years or an average of 16 days per controller per year.
3. The effects vary dependent on operational requirements.
4. Five.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

5. 6.00am to 9.45pm daily.
6. On one occasion, an air traffic controller omitted to pass an amended flight level to a climbing aircraft; there was no adverse safety impact.
7. One.
8. The incident was reviewed by the senior air traffic control managers and Airservices' Safety Management Group as per standard procedures.
9. No recommendations were made.
10. Refer Airservices Australia's response to Question AA 08.
11. No.