

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 01

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: CASA Audit Report - Air Traffic Management for Perth

Hansard Page: 124 (20/10/09)

Senator Adams asked:

Senator ADAMS—I think what I will do when I am home is count every aircraft that comes in over those routes, because they are coming straight over the top of me and I know exactly what is going on. I am pretty good as far as aircraft go; I have had a lot of experience. I probably spend more time in the air than on the ground at the present time. But it really has made a huge difference. A lot of them are flying very low—a lot lower than they were, actually—and I do not know what has caused that. Once we get the east-west wind blowing, they are all coming in through that particular route, so I can see why the residents in the hills are complaining. To get on with my questions: is the government going to make the CASA safety report public?

Mr Wilson—I will have to take that on notice.

Senator ADAMS—You will get back to the committee and let us know?

Mr Wilson—Certainly.

Answer:

CASA does not make its audit reports public, subject to its obligations under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 02

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Air Traffic Controller Sick Leave
Hansard Page: 132 (20/10/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—We had some discussion at the last estimates and the previous estimates about air traffic controller sick leave, and in response to my question you took it on notice. You gave me a table showing December 2008 through to May 2009 with single-day absences. Now that the agreement has been in force for some time, can you update those figures, either presently if you have them or on notice if you have not?

Mr Russell—I am not sure that we have them with us tonight, but I will ask my colleague Jason Harfield to perhaps comment. We may need to take it on notice if that is okay.

Mr Harfield—Since the agreement has come into place, we have seen a plateauing of absenteeism in the air traffic control environment and a downward trend, so we can supply the updated figures on notice.

Answer:

Air Traffic Controllers Sick Leave— Single Day Absences

| Dec 2008 | Jan 2009 | Feb 2009 | Mar 2009 | Apr 2009 | May 2009 | Jun 2009 | Jul 2009 | Aug 2009 | Sep 2009 | Oct 2009 |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 310 | 237 | 248 | 277 | 291 | 349 | 310 | 308 | 326 | 272 | 270 |

* October 09 data excludes all sick leave applications processed after COB 1st November 2009.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 03

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Trial of Unicom System

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Trial of Unicom system - air-traffic situational awareness trial

I refer to the air-traffic situational awareness trial called Unicom that is being conducted by Air Services Australia. I understand this was an initiative of Air Services Australia and has been conducted at Dubbo, Wagga Wagga in late 2007 and then expanded to include Port Macquarie, Hervey Bay and Olympic Dam. I further understand that it is an attempt to provide an alternative arrangement for regional airports catering for higher capacity jets now using aerodromes in regional Australia without the expensive infrastructure associated with licensed air traffic controllers and control towers.

1. Can you provide more information about the trial?
2. I gather, from the answers provided by the Government to a number of Questions on Notice, raised in the May Budget Estimates that Airservices Australia finished the trial on 31 March 2009. Is that correct?
3. I further understand that the trial cost \$650,000 and employed 19 casual employees. Is that correct?
4. Is it correct that Airservices Australia has finished its report analysis of the trial?
5. I further understand CASA has received this report. Is that correct?
6. When did CASA receive this report, given Airservices Australia concluded its analysis in late March?
7. According to the information provided on the Airservices Australia website, the future plan is to roll out Unicom services at similar regional airports around Australia.
8. When is that going to happen?
9. According to a number of non-answers this Committee received on the Unicom trial asked on Notice during the May Budget hearings, the Government is 'considering the report'. Is the Government still considering the report?
10. When did the Government receive the report?
11. Is that the same as CASA receiving the report?
12. Given that Airservices Australia concluded its analysis of the trial last March and it is now seven months later – when will the Government provide a response?
13. How long does it take to receive a response?
14. What are the conclusions of the trial?
15. When will the taxpayer be advised as to the results of the expenditure of \$650,000 of its money?

Answer:

1. Information about the Unicom trial is available on the Airservices Australia website: [<https://www.airservicesaustralia.com/projects/services/projects/unicom/default.asp>](https://www.airservicesaustralia.com/projects/services/projects/unicom/default.asp).
- 2-5. Yes.
6. 31 March 2009.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

- 7/8. Airservices have no current plans to roll out Unicom services.
- 9. CASA expects to provide a response to Airservices in relation to the trial shortly.
- 10. The Government has not received the report.
- 11. No.
- 12/13. See response to Question 9.
- 14. These are being considered by CASA.
- 15. See response to Question 9, noting that Airservices Australia funded the trial.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 04

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Unicom Trial Report

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. In your answers on 20 October 2009 you advised you had submitted some reports to the Minister. What are names of the reports, dates submitted and could we have copies please?

Answer:

Airservices Australia submitted a report entitled *Unicom Trial Proof of Concept Report March 2009* to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on 31 March 2009.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 05

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Perth Flight Paths

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

- 1 What date did recent changes to the flight path for aircraft to and from Perth International and Domestic Airport come into effect?
- 2 Were changes to the flight path for aircraft to and from Perth domestic and international airports made on the basis of Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) advice?
 - (a) If so, what was the advice of CASA?
 - (b) What were the safety concerns detailed by CASA?
- 3 Did Airservices Australia's Western Australia Route Review Project at Perth address these safety concerns?
 - (a) If so, what were the recommendations of that review?
 - (b) What recommendations of this review were implemented?
 - (c) How do the current (changed) flight paths address those, if any, safety concerns?
- 4 Was any assessment undertaken by agencies about potential noise impact resulting from changed flight paths?
 - (a) If so, which organisation undertook the noise review?
 - (b) What were the results of the assessment?
 - (c) What specific areas/suburbs were to experience increased aircraft noise?
- 5 Were affected residents notified of the change in flight paths?
 - (a) If yes, how were those affected residents notified?
 - (b) If no, why were affected residents not notified?
- 6 Was period of public consultation conducted with regard to the changes in flight paths?
 - (a) If so, what methods of public consultation were undertaken?
 - (b) If no, why was public consultation not undertaken?
- 7 Were interested parties given the opportunity to make written submissions about the change in flight paths?
- 8 Were affected residents notified in writing about the change in flight paths?
- 9 Were public meetings held regarding the changes in flight path?
 - (a) If yes?
 - (i) Were the public meetings advertised?
 - (ii) If so in which publications were advertisements placed and on what dates?
 - (iii) How many public meetings were held?
 - (iv) What dates were the public meetings held?
 - (v) Where were the public meetings held?
 - (vi) How many residents attended these public meetings?
 - (vii) Who (specify names) attended each of these public meetings?
 - (viii) Were elected representatives, including local councillors, State and Federal Members of Parliament notified that these public meetings were being held?
 - If so, which elected representatives were notified and did they attend the public meetings?
 - If no, why were these elected representatives not notified?

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Answer:

- 1 20 November 2008.
- 2 Yes, CASA's advice of 8 July 2003 complemented Airservices findings. The concerns were based on significant increases in traffic causing congestion on routes out of the Perth terminal area.
- 3 The Western Australia Route Review Project identified solutions for implementation to resolve identified airspace safety issues. These solutions were adopted as part of the WARRP implementation. The reduction of incident reports since implementation is a positive indicator that the restructure of routes has helped address safety issues.
- 4 – 9 Airservices Australia undertook an assessment of possible noise impacts as a result of flight path changes. Airservices Australia then began a consultation process.

The consultation model employed during the Western Australia Route Review Project (WARRP) is one the organisation has used nationally for airspace reviews for a number of years i.e. where proposals for change are safety driven. The process commenced in 2005/06, using consultation processes established by the previous Government. In Perth this involved the Perth Airport Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee comprised of community representatives, Federal and State MPs, local councils, community organisations and the Western Australian Government.

These consultation processes included Airservices regularly updating the Committee on progress of the review, including detailed information on proposed new arrival and departure routes, so that Committee members could inform their respective organisations and constituencies. Information on the review was also posted on Airservices' website.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
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Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 06

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Perth Noise Complaints

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

- 1 Is it correct that Airservices Australia has a Noise Enquiry Unit which manages community feedback and logs complaints about aircraft noise?
 - (a) If yes, please detail about how complaints are registered?
 - (b) What process is undertaken by the Unit once a complaint is registered?
 - (c) Do complainants receive responses from the Unit?
 - (d) How many complaints were made to the Noise Enquiry Unit specifically relating to Perth for the period from November 1st 2008 to August 1st 2009?
 - (e) How many complaints were made about aircraft noise in Perth for the 12 months proceeding 1st November 2008?
- 2 Residents of what areas/suburbs have made the most complaints about the changed flight paths?

Answer:

- 1 (a) – (c) Complaints and enquiries are received by mail, phone, fax, email or via the Internet. Responses vary depending on the nature of the complaint or enquiry and the information requested, if any. Phone enquiries are digitally recorded and staff seek to provide requested information during the call. Where enquiries require investigation and/or cannot be resolved on first contact, the complainant will be contacted when information is available. Airservices regularly provides summaries of complaints to respective airport community consultation committees – information that may identify individual complainants is not provided. Complainants receive responses from the Noise Enquiry Unit if requested – this is made clear at the time a complaint is lodged.
 - (d) 564 complaints from 239 complainants.
 - (e) 438 complaints from 226 complainants
- 2 Complaints have been received from suburbs adjoining the airport.