

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2012

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 134

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Proposed Review of Australian Standard AS2021: Acoustics – Aircraft Noise Intrusion

Proof Hansard Page/s: 68 (16/10/12)

Senator HUMPHRIES asked:

Senator HUMPHRIES: Did the document you put out for consultation for that month include an explicit reference to N60=6?

Mr Stone: I believe so, the one that was published in July.

Senator HUMPHRIES: The document is in front of you. Can you point to me which page you refer to.

Mr Stone: If it was not published, it is possible that it was an oversight.

Senator HUMPHRIES: You said it was published. Was it published or was it not published?

Mr Stone: I will have to check but what I would say is we published a draft proposal and took comments back from stakeholders. I do have recollection that some stakeholders pointed out that that particular metric may have been omitted from one of the draft proposals and suggested that it should be included.

Senator HUMPHRIES: You just told us it was included. Are you now withdrawing that evidence?

Mr Mrdak: I think it is best if we take this on notice and come back to you. It will give my office an opportunity to look at the document away from the table. We will come back to your question as soon as we can.

Answer:

On 24 July and 25 July 2012 emails and letters were sent notifying stakeholders of the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials Committee's proposal to request a review of the Australian Standard *AS 2021-2000 Acoustics – Aircraft noise intrusion – Building siting and construction*. The draft proposal was also posted on the Department of Infrastructure and Transport's website.

Revisions were made to the draft proposal following comments from stakeholders.

On 10 September 2012 a final version of the proposal was submitted to Standards Australia.

The draft proposal, public submissions and final proposal are available on the Department's website.

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Question no.: 135

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Air Asia X access to Avalon Airport

Proof Hansard Page/s: 68 (16/10/12)

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Senator RONALDSON: Mr Mrdak, back to the Avalon issue very quickly. It is my understanding that Air Asia approached the department in 2008 seeking landing rights for Avalon. Are you aware of that?

Mr Mrdak: Yes. We had discussions with that company some years ago.

Senator RONALDSON: For the record, is that an international airline?

Mr Mrdak: Yes. It is a Malaysian carrier.

Senator RONALDSON: Why did the government at the time deny landing rights to Air Asia? Can you remember?

Mr Mrdak: I do not think we denied rights. I think the capacity was available under the Malaysian air services agreement. I think it was a question for the Malaysian government as to how they allocated that capacity between their carriers. I would have to go back and check my recollection about the way in which the air service agreement negotiations took place at the time.

Senator RONALDSON: If you could just take that on notice for me.

Mr Mrdak: Yes, certainly.

Answer:

The Department has never denied landing rights to Air Asia X at Avalon Airport. Indeed, since February 2008, under the bilateral arrangements Malaysian carriers (including Air Asia X) have had traffic rights and unrestricted capacity entitlements to Avalon Airport.

The Malaysian Government is responsible for the allocation of capacity and traffic rights between its carriers. The Department of Infrastructure and Transport, being responsible for approving scheduled international airline services, has never received an application for services to Avalon Airport from Air Asia X.

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Question no.: 136

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Principles of Development Approval

Proof Hansard Page/s: 68-69 (16/10/12)

Senator FAWCETT asked:

Senator FAWCETT: I will just distribute this map. Mr Mrdak, I am sure you would be disappointed if I did not come back to the issue of leased airports and the lot of operators on airports versus airport use. I will give you a document here which is about pre-lease opportunities for land at Bankstown airport. I have contacted the lease operator at Bankstown airport and he was very prompt and very good about responding, saying that any approval for this land—you can see the hatched land here—covers an area of the airfield, which, for as long as those people can recall, has been an aviation side of the airfield. It is where helicopters take off and land and there are formed helipads in there. People have invested many hundreds of thousands dollars—it is not millions—in building their businesses adjacent to that land so they can use it. That is an operating part of the airfield. It is now a pre-lease opportunity, which would essentially provide the opportunity to build infrastructure where these people need to operate aircraft to run their business.

The leaseholder has come back and said that anything would be subject to assessment under the controls and building regulations, including consultation with adjacent tenants as required under the regulation of airports building control regulation 96, including approvals from the airport building controller and the airport environment controller. Given the context of NASAG and given the context of the lease conditions, which say that airports are scarce land and they should primarily be for aviation use,—I am happy to take it on notice—but could you respond as to the principles that the department will apply should an application come forward for this land to be developed for non-aviation use or, essentially, a build infrastructure where for decades people have been landing and operating helicopters as part of their businesses at Bankstown Airport?

Mr Mrdak: Certainly, Senator. I will just check with my officers if we are familiar with this proposal. I can just reiterate the government's policy position that in any master plan it would not look favourably upon any reduction in aeronautical activity zoning at an airport like Bankstown. That has been made very clear by the minister. I will just check with my colleagues.

Senator FAWCETT: This zoning was approved in a previous plan, but the issue is the context upon which people look at that land, 'We don't mind if there is other businesses built around the edge of this aviation operation,' but what has been put forward to the broader marketplace is that all of this land is available for building of hard stand warehouses and other things.

Mr Mrdak: As I said, the government has been very clear on its view to maintain aeronautical activity. I will have to check the status of this particular site. I am not familiar and I will check with my officers as to whether we are familiar with this proposal. Senator, I will have to take that on notice and we will come back to you with clear principles and also how we would handle such a proposal.

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Answer:

As a leased federal airport, Bankstown Airport is subject to a planning framework under the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act).

All development proposals must be consistent with the airport's Master Plan. The Act requires the airport to provide an assessment of the needs of civil aviation users as part of the Master Plan.

The 2005 Bankstown Master Plan identifies the site as an 'employment zone'. The Master Plan states the objective of the zone is to encourage a broad range and mix of employment and industrial development within a coordinated and cohesively planned environment.

All developments at airport sites are regulated through the Airports (Building Control) Regulations 1996 that provides a system for the approval of building activity on airports. Developments must also comply with the Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 1997 that regulate environment protection and pollution matters.

Any building activity on the site would require approval under the Regulations by the airport-lessee. The key principle an airport-lessee must take into account when considering an application is the consistency of the building with the final Master Plan, any Major Development Plan (MDP), the final environment strategy and BAL's planning objectives for the airport. Additionally, buildings must be approved by the Airport Building Controller in accordance with Building Codes.

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Question no.: 137

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Evans Head Airfield

Proof Hansard Page/s: 69 (16/10/12)

Senator FAWCETT asked:

Senator FAWCETT: Sure. Coming back to Evans Head airfield, I notice that the Office of Airspace Regulation has declined to approve the fly-neighbourly advice because of the proximity of residential areas to the aerodrome. On the basis of the fact that NASAG indicates that the Commonwealth government is responsible for safety and that agencies like this are saying that the buildings are too close to the airport to even approve a fly-neighbourly agreement, which is constraining generally how people fly to try and avoid things like noise impact, I would ask you to take on notice what role the Commonwealth should be having for ALOP aerodromes. I hear what you said before that it belongs to the council and you gave the councils money so they could develop it and use it for commercial purposes. If the Commonwealth still retains under NASAG the responsibility for safety, which is not only the people on the ground but also for the people in the air, developments like this and some in Queensland, where literally in Queensland some of the houses have been built within a stone's throw of active aerodromes—

CHAIR: I ask you to come to the question; we are four minutes over. You can take it on notice or you can answer it very quickly in 10 seconds.

Mr Doherty: We cannot answer it in that time. Senator, I understand that this is an issue that has been raised with us in correspondence in the last couple of weeks. I am not sure whether it goes to a safety issue, but we will certainly have a look at that. In relation to the broader issue, you are aware of the work that we are doing through NASAG to try and get cooperation from the states to control the development which could interfere. We are trying to have some influence on what happens outside the boundary of the airport or in the airport.

Answer:

Owners of ex-ALOP airports are responsible for complying with the relevant aviation safety requirements administered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

Under the terms of the ALOP Transfer Deeds, the Commonwealth's primary role is in ensuring that airport owners meet their obligations to continue to use each site as an aerodrome and that reasonable access is provided to aviation users.

Land use planning in and around regional airports is typically a matter for the relevant State Government.

However, the Department has sought, through NASAG, the cooperation of the states to control future inappropriate developments that may be proposed near airports.

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Question no.: 138

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Avalon Airport

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator RONALDSON asked:

Proof Hansard, 16 October 2012, p. 18, states that “Minister Albanese, at the request of Mr Marles...asked the department to take a lead role coordinating the activities across the Commonwealth for the development of Avalon Airport”. Given this coordination role of the department:

1. Why has it taken the department and the government so long to address issues with Avalon’s lease?
2. Why was Avalon’s lease not varied earlier, as opposed to just recently?
3. What are the factors that led to a delay in varying the lease and, therefore, have delayed making Avalon international?

Answer:

Avalon Airport is governed by a long term lease with the Department of Defence. Issues relating to the amendment of Avalon Airport’s lease are a matter for the Minister for Defence.

The Department of Infrastructure and Transport, the Department of Defence and the border agencies are continuing to work with Avalon Airport to facilitate their plans to become an international airport.

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Question no.: 139

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Aviation and Carbon Pricing

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator NASH asked:

1. Just to clarify in the answer that the Department provided me as it states “*Only fuel consumed on domestic flights will be subjected to an effective carbon price through an increase in the existing fuel excise on domestic aviation fuel. Fuel for international flights will not incur a carbon liability. Qantas and other Australian carriers will operate international services on the same basis as foreign carriers,*” domestic flights will see an increase in the existing fuel excise and international flights won’t be subjected to an increase aviation fuel excise due to the introduction of the Carbon tax is that correct?
2. Does the Department know how much of an increase in ticket prices on domestic flights have been since the introduction of the Carbon tax?
3. Has the department have any data on if there is an increase or decrease on how many people flew domestically after July 1st?
4. There have been reports in from Virgin Australia and Qantas that international flights will be subjected to fuel excise due to the EU Carbon Emissions Trading Scheme is that correct?
5. Will Australian travellers travelling to the EU be subjected to an increase in ticket prices because Airlines have to pass on the increase in the fuel excise due to the Carbon Price and a carbon price due to the EU Emission Trading Scheme is that correct?
6. Does the Department have any information on how much it will cost an individual traveller travelling to say London return?
7. Does the Department have any data on if there has been an increase or decrease in travel to international destinations in particularly to the EU?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Air ticket prices are commercial decisions made by airlines for a variety of reasons.
3. The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics has reported that the number of domestic air passengers between July and September 2012 increased by 5.5 per cent compared to the corresponding period in 2011.
4. No.
5. The domestic price on fuel does not apply to international flights.
6. Refer to answer 2.
7. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the total number of short term departures to Europe by Australian residents increased by 1.3 per cent in the first eight months of 2012 compared to the same period of 2011.

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Question no.: 140

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Airline Customer Advocate

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator NASH asked:

I refer to the appointment of the Airline Customer Advocate in July.

1. Can you provide an overview of the Advocate's responsibilities?
2. What is the average turnaround time of complaints to the Advocate?
3. What is the accepted turnaround time of complaints to the Advocate?
4. How many staff are employed by the Advocate?
5. Where are they located?
6. What is the budget of the Advocate in 2012-13?
7. What is the budget of the Advocate in each financial year of the forward estimates?
8. Does the Advocate receive any government funding or support? If so, what does this funding or support entail?
9. Were government funds used to establish the office of the Advocate? If so, how much did this cost?
10. Is the Airline Advocate solely funded by the airline industry? If so, how is this funding agreement determined?
11. Please provide a month by month breakdown of how many complaints the Advocate has received since its establishment?

Answer:

1. The Airline Customer Advocate is an industry based organisation, independent of Government, which helps facilitate the timely resolution of complaints regarding airlines that participate in the scheme. The Airline Customer Advocate will also monitor and report on the major areas of customer complaint, including the number of complaints received and the major reasons for complaints to each participating airline.
2. This question should be referred to the Airline Customer Advocate.
3. This question should be referred to the Airline Customer Advocate.
4. This question should be referred to the Airline Customer Advocate.
5. The Airline Customer Advocate is based in Sydney.
6. The Airline Customer Advocate is funded by participating airlines. The Government does not contribute to the costs of the Airline Customer Advocate.
7. See answer 6 above.
8. No.
9. No.
10. Yes. Funding is provided in accordance with a confidential funding agreement in place between participating airlines. The Government understands that each airlines' contribution is proportional to the number of complaints received by the advocate about that airline.
11. This question should be referred to the Airline Customer Advocate.

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Question no.: 141

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Aviation White Paper

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator NASH asked:

In relation to actions outlined in the Aviation White Paper can you please provide an update on the following:

Australia's international air services policy framework

1. Regional aviation packages (page 48): in relation to the Government's commitments to encourage international airlines to land in regional ports such as Darwin, Cairns and Broome. In relation to the commitment to increase these opportunities by offering additional beyond rights and improved access to major gateway markets for international flights linked to secondary gateways.
 - (a) How many airlines have taken up this opportunity and to which ports?
 - (b) Are you aware of any concerns by regional airports or organisations that the enhanced package announced in the White Paper is not meeting its objectives? If so, which airports?
 - (c) What benefit has the enhanced package had for Adelaide Airport?
 - (d) What benefit has the enhanced package had for Darwin Airport?
 - (e) Has the Department undertaken a review of the programme's effectiveness? Is the Department reviewing the programme? If not, is a review scheduled?
2. Amendment to *Qantas Sale Act 1992* (page 49): in relation to the Government's commitment to remove some restrictions on foreign ownership of Qantas the White Paper outlines the government's intention to remove the 25% restriction for foreign individual shareholdings and 35% for total foreign airlines shareholdings but retain the general 49% limit on foreign investment.
 - (a) Has the Department taken any action to implement this recommendation? If so, what? If not, why not?
3. Completing the CASA regulatory reform program by 2011 (page 69): in relation to the White Paper commitment to complete the CASA regulatory reform program by 2011:
 - (a) I understand that as at July 2012 this process still isn't complete. Do you have a revised completion date?
 - (b) What remains to be finalised?
 - (c) Why has this taken 12 months longer than outlined in the White Paper?
4. Mutual recognition in aviation auto-parts industry (page 69): in relation to the White Paper Commitment to establish mutual recognition arrangements with key trading partners to lower the regulatory burden for Australia's aircraft and parts exporters:
 - (a) What action(s) has the Department taken to implement this commitment?
 - (b) What arrangements have been agreed to?
 - (c) With which trading partners?
 - (d) When were these agreed to?

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- (e) If none has been agreed to, why have no agreements been made?
- (f) Are any agreements in negotiations?
- (g) Has the Department undertaken a review of this commitment? Is the Department reviewing policies in this area? If not, is a review scheduled?

Industry skills and productivity

- 5. Air traffic controller standards and qualifications (page 81): in relation to the commitment in the White Paper to ensure the closer alignment of national civil and military air traffic controller standards and qualifications. In light of the recent near miss over Darwin:
 - (a) What action(s) has the Department taken to implement this recommendation?
 - (b) What changes have been made to “ensure closer alignment”?
 - (c) What changes have been made to civil air traffic controller standards?
 - (d) What changes have been made to military air traffic controller standards?
 - (e) What changes have been made to civil air traffic controller qualifications?
 - (f) What changes have been made to military air traffic controller qualifications?
 - (g) Has the Department undertaken a review of this commitment? Is the Department reviewing policies in this area? If not, is a review scheduled?

Australian Consumer Law

- 6. Corporate Charters for complaints (page 92): in relation to the White Paper’s commitment to develop Corporate Charters to set benchmarks for standards for complaints.
 - (a) Has this occurred? If so, when was it finalised? If not, why not?
 - (b) Is this included as part of the work of the Airline Customer Advocate?

Passengers with Disabilities

- 7. Disability Access Facilitation Plans (page 92): the White Paper committed to facilitating the development of Disability Access Facilitation Plans by airlines and airports
 - (a) Has this occurred? If so when? If not, why not?
 - (b) What ‘facilitating’ action has the Department taken?
 - (c) Which airports/airlines have developed these Plans?
 - (d) What is the timeframe for full implementation?

Aviation safety regulation and investigation

- 8. CASA offices in Townsville, Cairns and Darwin (page 115): the White Paper states that offices in Townsville, Cairns and Darwin will be maintained.
 - (a) Has this occurred?
 - (b) Has there been any decrease in staff at:
 - Townsville
 - Cairns
 - Darwin
 - (c) If so, how can you say that the offices will be maintained as outlined in the White Paper?

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9. Air safety inspector work-bases (page 115): the White Paper states that new work-bases for air safety inspectors in Gove, Kununurra, Broom and on Horn Island will be established:
- (a) Has this occurred? If not, why not? If so, when? If not, which of the offices have been established and which haven't been established?

Australia's aviation security policy framework

10. Annual certification requirements for screening officers and screening authorities (page 148): the White Paper commits to annual certification requirements for screening officers and authorities:
- (a) Has this been implemented? If not, why not? If so, when?
- (b) What does this certification entail?
- (c) How does it work?

Answer:

1. (a) China Southern Airlines is commencing a Guangzhou-Brisbane-Cairns-Guangzhou service in December 2012. This is the first utilisation of the 'enhanced' Regional Package. A number of airlines (for example: Jetstar Airways, Emirates Airline, Malaysia Airlines, Air Asia X) utilise the original Regional Package, which offers open capacity to all regional international airports.
- (b) The Department maintains an ongoing dialogue with international aviation stakeholders on matters of interest to them, and also consults prior to each international air services negotiation on the specific elements of that negotiation. Views are often provided on specific outcomes stakeholders wish to see from a negotiation, including, in the case of individual airports, commercial rights to operate to that airport. In most cases, these views are provided on a commercial-in-confidence basis as they relate to ongoing commercial negotiations between airports and airlines.
- (c) The 'enhanced' Regional Package has offered Adelaide Airport an additional opportunity for marketing the attractiveness of serving Adelaide.
- (d) The 'enhanced' Regional Package has offered Darwin Airport an additional opportunity for marketing the attractiveness of serving Darwin.
- (e) A specific review of the policy has not been conducted.
2. The Government is committed to ensuring that Qantas is majority Australian-owned and based in Australia.
3. Work on the Flight Crew Licensing and Training Suite of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASRs) is complete and it is expected those regulations will be made in the near future. The remaining regulations to be completed are the Operational Suite, as well as phase two of the Maintenance Suite for charter, aerial work and private operators, both of which are expected to be finalised in 2013.
4. (a) CASA has sought to engage with key aviation trading partners and has in place and is in the process of negotiating a number of mutual recognition arrangements.
- (b)-(e) CASA has finalised a Memorandum of Understanding for Promotion of Civil Aviation Safety with the Brazilian Civil Aviation Agency in August 2010 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Implementation Procedures on Airworthiness with the Republic of Korea in May 2012.

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(f) CASA has undertaken discussions with a number of foreign aviation safety regulators to lower the regulatory burden for Australia's aircraft and component manufacturing industry by establishing new arrangements or revising existing ones including Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Canada and the United States. Ongoing discussions with the European Aviation Safety Agency are taking place in the context of the broader negotiations between Australia and the European Commission on the comprehensive air services agreement.

(g) No.

5. (a)–(g) Airservices Australia (Airservices) and the Department of Defence (Defence) have advised that in accordance with the policy direction set out in the Government's Aviation White Paper, the Australian Civil-Military Air Traffic Management Committee (AC-MAC) was established in August 2009 to enhance harmonisation and oversee collaboration activities between Airservices and Defence. The Committee has made considerable progress in the delivery of Aviation White Paper objectives, including a substantial program of work focused on the harmonisation of systems, operations, procedures, safety, training, development, regulation and support.

Enhancements include the development of a formal arrangement between the two organisations to provide mutual assistance for air traffic control training in times of training surges.

In relation to controller standards, Airservices and Defence operate according to the Manual of Air Traffic Services (MATS). The MATS is based on Civil Aviation Safety Regulations Part 172 – Manual of Standards and the International Civil Aviation Organization Standards and Recommended Practices, combined with requirements specified by Airservices and Defence. The requirements and obligations detailed in MATS are in accordance with provisions and regulations of the *Air Navigation Act 1920*, *Air Services Act 1995* and Defence Instructions. MATS is reviewed regularly by Airservices and Defence and is updated up to four times a year.

In relation to air traffic controller qualifications, in October 2012, Airservices and Defence oversaw the transition of training to a national Diploma of Air Traffic Control (AVI08 endorsed by the National Quality Council). This approach is consistent with civil aviation standards and regulations.

6. (a) Yes. The last charter was implemented in May 2012.
- (b) Airlines have committed (through their customer charters) to participating in the Airline Customer Advocate scheme. The Airline Customer Advocate can consider complaints where airlines have not acted consistently with other commitments in their charters.
7. (a) Yes. The Disability Access Facilitation Plan (DAFP) initiative has been progressively implemented by airline and airport operators. To date 10 airlines and 31 airports across Australia have prepared and published DAFPs.
- (b) The Department consulted extensively with aviation industry operators and disability advocates through the Aviation Access Working Group (AAWG), and developed templates and guidelines to assist airline and airport operators to prepare plans. The Department wrote to major and regional airlines and airport operators encouraging the development of DAFPs. The Department continues to work with the disability community, airlines and airports on the implementation and improvement of plans.
- (c) A list of published DAFPs is included on the AAWG page on the Department's website at <http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/aawg/disability.aspx>

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(d) The plans are voluntary. However, plans are now in place for all of the major Australian domestic airlines and for all capital city airports and major regional airports, collectively covering over 90% of the passengers transiting through Australian airports. Airline and airport operators update DAFPs as necessary to continue to facilitate and improve access requirements.

8. (a)-(c) Yes.

Since 2009 staff is as follows:

- (1) Townsville - a reduction of 3 staff including two administrative positions;
- (2) Cairns - an increase of 3 staff; and
- (3) Darwin - no changes.

CASA manages staffing based upon both the volume and complexity of the regional aviation industry. Movements in CASA staffing numbers in Townsville and Cairns were made to correspond with changing regulatory needs in those regions.

9. (a) Yes. All these work-bases were established in October 2009.

10. The work is in progress. A new qualification of Aviation Protection Officer was endorsed by National Skills Standards Council on 15 June 2012. Annual certification arrangements for the new qualification are now being developed in consultation with industry.

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Question no.: 142

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Airservices Australia Board Selection and Appointments

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator NASH asked:

1. What are the eligibility/selection criteria for appointment to the Airservices Australia Board?
2. Is a background in aviation a pre-requisite for appointment?
3. What is the usual process undertaken prior to the appointment of a person to the Board?
Assessment of selection criteria? Interviews? Etc?
4. Is there a selection panel? If so, who is on the selection panel?
5. And the selection panel makes a recommendation to the Minister for his approval?
6. For the new appointments announced in June:
 - Samantha Betzien
 - Annette Kimmitt
 - Paul Lucas
 - Anthony Mathews
 - (a) Can you outline the process that was undertaken for each of those candidates?
 - (b) Did all appointees go through the same process?
 - (c) Were all appointees recommended to the Minister by the selection panel?
 - (d) Did the Minister recommend any particular candidate to the selection panel or put any candidate forward for selection?

Answer:

The Airservices Australia (Airservices) Board comprises of members with an appropriate mix of skills, such as aviation, finance, law, workplace relations, management and other skills relevant to the organisation's operations. Members are appointed on the basis of their individual capacity to contribute to the Board and on their ability to contribute to the organisation fulfilling its legislative functions, obligations and objectives.

The *Air Services Act 1995* requires that all Board members (other than the Chief Executive Officer) be appointed by the Minister. All Airservices Board appointments made in June 2012 were made in accordance with this Act.

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Question no.: 143

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Loss of Separation - Qantas Jets over Darwin

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator NASH asked:

I refer to a well-reported incident on 2 October 2012 in which Qantas jets came within 250 metres of a mid-air collision. I understand that there will be a Defence investigation into the incident.

1. Is CASA undertaking a separate investigation into this incident?
2. If so, what will this entail? What are your preliminary findings?
3. How did this incident occur?
4. What measures have been put in place to ensure that it does not occur again?
5. Are you confident with the effectiveness of the air traffic management systems at Darwin Airport?

Answer:

CASA has advised that it undertook a preliminary review to determine if any actions by Airservices contributed to the incident. No evidence of inappropriate action was found.

An ATSB investigation is currently underway. The preliminary facts are available via the ATSB website at:

http://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation_reports/2012/air/ao-2012-131.aspx.

At this stage it would not be appropriate to comment on how the incident occurred.

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Question no.: 144

Program: 2.4 Air Transport

Division/Agency: (AAA) Aviation and Airports

Topic: Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) Flights in Western Australia

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator XENOPHON asked:

1. Have additional safety measures been put in place to deal with the FIFO flights in Western Australia?
2. What are these measures and when were they put in place?

Answer:

Aviation agencies have put in place a number of measures in WA to enhance air traffic safety (including FIFO flights), which include:

1. For the Civil Aviation Safety Authority:
 - airspace reviews conducted in the last 12 months at Perth and Port Hedland; and
 - audit and surveillance activity including a surveillance sweep in the northern region of Western Australia in July 2012, which included FIFO.
2. For Airservices Australia:
 - commencing air traffic control services at Broome and Karratha aerodromes to meet the CASA enhanced controlled airspace requirements;
 - a new radar commissioned into service at the beginning of November 2012 at Parabadoo, enabling air traffic control surveillance and the ability to respond to the increase in air traffic in the Pilbara; and
 - new air routes established as part of the West Australian Route Review Project in November 2008.