



AUSTRALIAN
AIRPORTS
ASSOCIATION

Ms Sophie Dunstone
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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Transport Security Amendment (Testing and Training) Bill 2019

Dear Ms Dunstone,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed *Transport Security Amendment (Testing and Training) Bill 2019* (the Bill) currently being considered by the Committee.

The Bill introduces measures into the Act that will require airport security screening officers to complete relevant training and hold specific qualifications before exercising their powers at security-controlled airports.

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) wants to draw the Committee's attention to two issues surrounding this part of the Bill: firstly, the level of consultation undertaken by the Australian Government and secondly, the ambiguity regarding transitional provisions for the new training and qualification requirements for airport security screening officers.

Consultation: The Australian Government undertakes consultation on aviation security matters with airports and other aviation industry participants through the Aviation Security and Advisory Forum (ASAF) and the Regional Industry Consultative Meeting (RICM). Both groups are run by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). The AAA is a member of ASAF and RICM along with major urban, regional and remote airports. The ASAF terms of reference outline the forum's role to:

"...facilitate engagement and consultation between the Department and aviation industry participants" for "...constructive industry-Government exchange of views on aviation security issues of an operational, legal, policy or regulatory nature."

At the November 2019 ASAF and RICM meetings, the Bill was not listed for discussion in the meeting papers, except for a reference to new training and qualification requirements for screening officers from "pending legislative changes". The introduction into the Australian Parliament of the counterpart transport security Bill [*Transport Security Amendment (Serious Crime) Bill 2019*] was discussed at the ASAF meeting.

Transitional Provisions:

The AAA is concerned that DHA has not clearly articulated timelines for the transition to the new qualification and training regime once the Bill becomes law, particularly the annual accreditation testing for security screening officers. The DHA webpage 'Security screening' is unclear on the implementation dates for the annual testing regime, beyond stating that "An appropriate transition period will ensure minimal disruption to operations".¹

Considering these comments, the AAA endorses the objectives of the Bill in updating training and qualification requirements and raising the standard for qualification, ongoing education and competency levels required for airport security screening officers. The AAA supports the passage of the Bill through the Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Bourke
Acting Chief Executive Officer

¹ Department of Home Affairs, 'Security Screening'. Viewed on 13 January 2020 at:
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/transport-security/air-cargo-and-aviation/aviation/security-screening>