

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 2023 - 2024

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Committee Question Number: 39

Departmental Question Number: SQ24-000037

Division/Agency Name: Agency - Airservices Australia

Hansard Reference: Spoken, Page No. 67 (12 February 2024)

Topic: Airservices – Advice from the department regarding the retirement incentive scheme

Senator Raff Ciccone asked:

Senator CICCONE: Did the department at all provide any advice or views with respect to the decision about offering those incentives to employees?

Mr Harfield: It was discussed with the department, understanding what I call the One Airservices Plan. The reason that people were doing it and managing and ensuring that we continue to manage our trainee throughput and manage our workforce, is that during COVID—although it seemed that traffic was fine—we were still operating fairly heavily. For example, Western Australia was still operating at about 80 per cent capacity of the pre-COVID traffic.

Senator CICCONE: Okay, but my question was: Did the department actually give you any advice, any feedback?

Mr Harfield: We were in discussion because it was also about our continued funding.

Senator CICCONE: Were they positive? Negative? Did they say, 'Hey, maybe this is a bad idea'?

Mr Harfield: Off the top of my head, we would have taken on any advice that they had raised. But it was all about how were we going to sustain the organisation—

Senator CICCONE: What did they raise?

Mr Harfield: I said 'we would have'. I can't remember or I can't recall.

Senator CICCONE: Can you take it on notice and have a look?

Mr Harfield: Yes, we can.

Answer:

Airservices provided regular briefings to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts on its workforce plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through its One Airservices Plan.

The One Airservices Plan formed the basis of the 2020-21 Corporate Plan, approved by the then Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, the Hon Michael McCormack MP.

The former Minister's *Statement of Expectations for Airservices Australia for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023* (www.legislation.gov.au/F2021L00930/asmade/text) included an expectation that Airservices would ensure that necessary steps are taken in minimising the financial impacts of COVID-19 in accordance with the 'One Airservices' Business Plan.