

Question on notice no. 115

Portfolio question number: 115

2020-21 Additional estimates

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development and Communications Portfolio**

Senator Larissa Waters: asked the Airservices Australia on 6 April 2021—

The Statement of Expectations for Airservices Australia for the Period 15 July 2019 to 30 June 2021, issued by Michael McCormack MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development on 4 July 2019, only requires Airservices to provide, "appropriate resourcing of the Noise Complaints and Information Service [NCIS] to continue to improve the flow and quality of information to noise affected communities." Does Airservices require the NCIS team to do anything other than providing noise information, e.g. proactively advocate for international best practice noise abatement strategies at Australian airports? Or is it simply just an information and data logging service? Airservices Australia appears to have a stake in

(i) the design of aviation airspace management regimes (flight paths) and airspace classification;

(ii) levying of Navigation Charges and Rescue Firefighting Services to airlines, and; (iii) providing the Noise Complaints and Information Service [NCIS]. To what extent does Airservices carry out regulatory oversight - if any - and how does it manage its conflict of interest between being a commercial, incorporated entity of the government required to support increasing airspace capacity, and looking after local communities across Australia affected by aircraft noise?

Answer —

Answer attached.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2020 - 2021
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

Committee Question Number: 115
Departmental Question Number: SQ21-000155

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Capacity optimisation and noise abatement
Proof Hansard Page: Written (6 April 2021)

Senator Larissa Waters asked:

The Statement of Expectations for Airservices Australia for the Period 15 July 2019 to 30 June 2021, issued by Michael McCormack MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development on 4 July 2019, only requires Airservices to provide, “appropriate resourcing of the Noise Complaints and Information Service [NCIS] to continue to improve the flow and quality of information to noise affected communities.” Does Airservices require the NCIS team to do anything other than providing noise information, e.g. proactively advocate for international best practice noise abatement strategies at Australian airports? Or is it simply just an information and data logging service?

Airservices Australia appears to have a stake in (i) the design of aviation airspace management regimes (flight paths) and airspace classification; (ii) levying of Navigation Charges and Rescue Firefighting Services to airlines, and; (iii) providing the Noise Complaints and Information Service [NCIS]. To what extent does Airservices carry out regulatory oversight – if any – and how does it manage its conflict of interest between being a commercial, incorporated entity of the government required to support increasing airspace capacity, and looking after local communities across Australia affected by aircraft noise?

Answer:

1. Airservices Australia’s Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) fulfils the functions required to meet its obligations under the *Ministerial Statement of Expectations 2019-2021* and Ministerial Directive 37/1999, which includes a requirement to “provide, maintain and enhance public response and reporting services through a dedicated Noise Enquiry Service at airports covered by the *Airports Act 1996* and other major Australian airports.” These functions are to receive complaints from the community, to investigate and to provide information on aircraft operations to the community.
2. Airservices is an air navigation service provider not a regulator. The *Air Services Act 1995* requires Airservices to regard the safety of air navigation as the most important consideration. Subject to this requirement being satisfied, Airservices must then ensure that as far as is practicable, the environment is protected from the effects of the operation and use of aircraft; and the effects associated with the operation and use of aircraft.