

**Question on notice no. 188**

**Portfolio question number: SQ23-003783**

**2023-24 Budget estimates**

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

**Senator Dean Smith:** asked the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on 23 May 2023—

Senator DEAN SMITH: What actions has CASA taken since the release of the ATSB report on 12 April this year?

Ms Spence: I might get my colleague to come to the table. Essentially, we have done extensive campaigns to educate pilots on what is appropriate and how to operate legally. We are working again with the Helicopter Industry Association to see whether there are any ways that we influence behaviours of pilots. We are looking at how we best ensure that pilots are aware of when certain requirements, such as their medicals, have expired. We already give them notice around that. It is about whether there anything else we can do to make sure that they make all the effort to maintain currency. I might turn to my colleague, Mr Marcelja.

Mr Marcelja: Within my remit is safety education for pilots. As Ms Spence said, the approach we take for private operations is very much around raising awareness and educating. We have many different campaigns, including seminars to pilots and online training. We have been running a pilot safety campaign since about August last year. That is specifically targeting safety behaviours in pilots. We are getting some really good uptake and participation in that. It is very much an educative approach. We have about 30,000 plus pilots in Australia. Helicopters make up maybe 10 per cent or so of that.

Senator DEAN SMITH: To be clear, we are talking about a particular type of helicopter and a particular type of activity in a remote part of Northern Australia. Mr Walker, you talked about risk management techniques. The ATSB report does demonstrate that there was more than one incident with regard to the pilot. I am curious to know why the risk management technique you talked about did not identify this. I understand the importance of the education campaign, but, to be fair, it sounds generic.

Mr Marcelja: I think the point I'm making and that the director was making is that our surveillance, enforcement and oversight activity is very much focused on commercial operations. We focus very strongly on commercial operators and tourism operators.

Senator DEAN SMITH: I am not an aviation expert. As a layman, reading the ATSB report makes it very clear to me that the emerging risk is actually amongst private pilots and private operators. I am keen to understand what you are doing to mitigate what I would characterise as an emerging risk.

Ms Spence: One thing I would like to clarify is that we did obviously look back—that is one of the things we do—to see what visibility or awareness we had of the pilot and any incidents that he had been involved in. All we found was one incident that had been acquitted. If you get a demerit point and then that demerit point is—

Senator DEAN SMITH: What was that one incident?

Ms Spence: I will have to take it on notice. I'm sorry. I thought had a piece of paper here.

**Answer** —

Please find answer attached.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024**

**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts**

**Committee Question Number: 188**

**Departmental Question Number: SQ23-003783**

**Division/Agency Name: Agency - Civil Aviation Safety Authority**

**Hansard Reference: Spoken, Page No. 131-132 (23 May 2023)**

**Topic: CASA – Broome Pilot previous incident**

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**Answer:**

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) issued Mr Thomas with a counselling letter on 25 June 2019 after he was observed on 19 June 2019 operating a R44 Helicopter registered VH-ZGY at Jandakot airport in a manner which could create a hazard to himself or another aircraft and without authorisation from the aerodrome control service.

This was identified following searches of CASA's flight crew licencing, authorisation, enforcement and surveillance records. CASA is continuing to conduct a broader search of general files to determine if any other safety occurrences have been identified involving Mr Thomas.