

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

Question No. 57

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 13 February 2007:

With reference to the discussion regarding Civil Maritime Surveillance Plans (CMSPs) at the hearing on 13 February 2007:

- a) For each month since 1 July 2005, could Customs provide:
 - i) The number of flights planned at the start of the month
 - ii) The number of flying hours planned at the start of the month
 - iii) The number of flights that took place as originally planned at the start of the month

- b) The number of flights that were rescheduled due to:
 - i) A change in priority on the day
 - ii) An change in priority prior to the day that the flight was scheduled to occur
 - iii) Adverse weather conditions
 - iv) Aircrew availability
 - v) Contractor's inability to deliver (dues to reasons other than aircrew availability)
 - vi) Aircraft serviceability

- c) The number of flights that were cancelled due to:
 - i) A change in priority on the day
 - ii) An change in priority prior to the day that the flight was scheduled to occur
 - iii) Adverse weather conditions
 - iv) Aircrew availability
 - v) Contractor's inability to deliver (dues to reasons other than aircrew availability)
 - vi) Aircraft serviceability
 - vii) The average number of days between when a rescheduled flight was originally scheduled and when it was actually performed.

- d) Could Customs provide a percentage breakdown for rescheduled flights for each of 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date, covering the main reason for rescheduling?
- e) Could Customs provide a percentage breakdown for cancelled flights for each of 2005-06 and 2006-07 to date, covering the main reason for cancellation?
- f) Mr Marshall stated at the hearing that Customs recognizes "that there will be occasions when the aircraft cannot fly for a number of reasons, so we overprogram to try to make up for that":
 - i) Could Customs provide for each month since 1 July 2004 the level of overprogramming that has occurred in percentage terms and in number of flights (provide as a total for Coastwatch and for Surveillance Australia in particular).
 - ii) Could Customs detail any changes to the practice of overprogramming that has occurred in the last 5 years?

- g) Do the CMSPs explicitly mention this practice of overprogramming?
 - i) If so, could Customs provide a relevant excerpt from an CMSP that stipulates the level of overprogramming for that month and the reasoning behind it?
 - ii) If not, where is the practice documented?

- h) Are Coastwatch clients aware of the practice of over programming?
 - i) If not, why not?
 - ii) If so, are they informed for each flight whether it is a core flight or actually an ‘over programmed flight’?

The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

Question 57 seeks data for each month since 1 July 2005. Some of this data is either not available, or is not available in the format in which it is sought. In the latter instance, it would be necessary to extract information from individual flight records. This represents a significant commitment of resources from staff who are required to provide support to Border Protection Command (BPC) flying operations. In order to limit the impact on Coastwatch operations of extracting this information, the responses provided have been limited to the period from March 2006 to February 2007.

57 (a) (i) and (ii) The following are the flights and hours planned as at the start of each month:

Table: Planned Coastwatch flights and hours. March 2006 to February 2007

	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Total
Planned fixed wing flights	380	370	380	370	370	357	368	371	373	368	379	365	4451
Planned fixed wing hours	1827.5	1777	1827.5	1777	1777	1827.5	1782.2	1796.5	1804.9	1782.2	1832.6	1791.5	21603

57 (a) (iii) Coastwatch flights are initially planned three months in advance. Up until the actual time of the takeoff, and even in-flight, the individual details of the plan may be varied by an authorised officer for a range of reasons. Flight data is recorded in the BPC Coastwatch Command and Support System (CWCSS). CWCSS is not able to provide a report that compares the details of individual flights completed against a flight plan at a particular point in time (for example the commencement of each month.) However, the following Table shows the number of Coastwatch flights for the period March 2006 to February 2007.

Table: Flights undertaken by Coastwatch aircraft March 2006 to February 2007

	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Total
Fixed wing flights	362	330	394	382	376	378	321	353	325	322	294	309	4146
Fixed wing hours	1613.27	1503.63	1825.97	1838.12	1771.46	1785.68	1587.28	1651.00	1471.20	1461.20	1355.95	1461.07	19325.83

(b) CWCSS does not keep data on flight rescheduling. Where a flight does not take place as planned, the relevant strip (the record containing the flight plan data) is voided within the system and a new strip is created for the rescheduled flight. It is not possible to identify the new strip as a rescheduled flight.

c) (i) to (vi)

Border Protection Command does not collect data in the format requested for this question. The following data is presented in the categories in which it is recorded:

Tables: **Fixed wing flights cancelled or aborted. March 2006 to February 2007**

Fixed wing flights cancelled or aborted at contractor instigation arising from:	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Total
Aircraft Unserviceability	31	30	30	12	4	19	15	21	12	10	30	38	252
Crew Duty Limitation	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	0	2	11
Crew Illness	3	6	4	15	31	18	12	6	18	14	12	5	144
Crew Unavailability	10	23	31	21	36	39	63	57	79	83	75	45	562
Weather	7	4	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	7	29
Total	52	63	71	50	71	77	92	84	109	111	121	97	998

Fixed wing flights cancelled or aborted at BPC instigation arising from:	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb-07	Total
Asset Retasked	19	78	82	5	12	15	3	5	0	6	10	25	260
Scheduled Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Flight Not Required	17	15	5	5	2	6	12	6	5	3	7	8	91
Released for Search and Rescue	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Weather	10	11	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	10	37
Total	46	105	87	11	17	21	15	12	5	10	19	44	392

Notes: These figures do not include Charter Flights or flights undertaken by on behalf of BPC by Australian Maritime Safety Authority aircraft.

Cancelled flights are those that do not take off. *Aborted* flights take off, but do not commence surveillance.

- (vii) This information is not available. See response to Question 57 (b)
- (d) This information is not available. See response to Question 57 (b)
- (e) The following Table provides data on fixed wing flights cancelled or aborted from July 2006 to February 2007 as a percentage of all fixed wing flights.

Table: Fixed wing flights cancelled or aborted. July 2006 to February 2007

Cancelled/Aborted By:	Reason	Flights	Per cent
Coastwatch	Asset Retasked	76	2.35
	Identified Scheduled Maintenance	1	0.03
	Flight Not Required	49	1.52
	Weather	12	0.37
	Released for Search and Rescue	1	0.03
Contractor	Aircraft Unserviceable	149	4.61
	Crew Duty Limitation	8	0.25
	Crew Illness	116	3.59
	Crew Unavailability	477	14.75
	Weather	16	0.49
	Flight occurred	2328	72.01
	Total	3223	100.00%

Note: These figures do not include charter flights or flights undertaken on behalf of BPC by Australian Maritime Safety Authority aircraft.

- (f) (i) The extent of additional planning can vary throughout a year (for example it may be greater for those periods when weather is potentially an issue), but it has traditionally been of the order of eight to ten per cent.

Data is not available to provide a monthly breakdown.

- (ii) Customs has regularly overprogrammed throughout the period of the contract.
- g) No.
 - (i) Not applicable
 - (ii) This practice is part of the CMSP strategic planning process in recognition that not all flights will occur as briefed when planned three months out.
- h) i) and ii) Coastwatch clients are aware that the nature and timing of preparation of the strategic CMSP requires inbuilt flexibility to accommodate emergent operational and infrastructure requirements.