

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES - 25 FEBRUARY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE14/292) PROGRAMME – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Carr (Written) asked:

The following questions refer to the movement of aircraft used to transport asylum seekers from Christmas Island to Nauru/Manus Island. (a) Do you have any indicative costing's for the new arrangements (referring to DIBP new arrangement with Health Advisor)? (b) Is it the case that the aircraft's movements are tracked by the global flight tracking organisation FlightAware?

(c) Please advise whether or not the Government, either the department or ministers, have requested that these aircraft movements not be tracked?

(d) Provide a breakdown on notice of the flights made between 7 September 2013—where the flights have originated from; the destinations of flights; what refuelling occurred; the passenger capacity of each aircraft; how many flight staff—DIBP staff and others that are on each flight, and from which agency; the flight schedule; and how many flights per week, day or month have been undertaken since.

(e) For what reasons are people transferred from onshore to offshore detention?

(f) Can you confirm that the Government has leased two A319 aircrafts from Sky traders to transfer asylum seekers between Manus and Christmas Islands?

(g) Provide a breakdown of information on the flights being made since 7 September 2013;

(i) Where does the flight originate from?

(ii) What is the destination of the flight?

(iii) Where does refuelling occur?

(iv) What is the passenger capacity of each aircraft?

(v) How many staff (flight staff, DIPB staff and any others) are on each flight and from what agency?

(vi) Is there a flight schedule?

(vii) How many flights per day/week/month (since 7 September

Answer:

- a) The creation of the Independent Health Adviser position will not have any impact on the costing of transporting detainees from Christmas Island to an Offshore Processing Centre.
- b) Flights undertaken by the two A319 aircraft operated by Skytraders are not tracked by FlightAware. The flights undertaken by the Our Airline 737-300 contracted through Adagold Aviation can be tracked through the global flight tracking organisation FlightAware.
- c) The government has not requested that movements by its contracted air charter providers not be tracked.

- d) See answers at (g) below.
- e) Under section 198AD of the Migration Act illegal maritime arrivals to Australia remain subject to transfer to a regional processing country.
- f) The department has a lease for one aircraft through Skytraders and an MOU with the Australian Antarctic Division for the use of a second aircraft operated by Skytraders. Both of these aircraft are used to support transfer operations to Offshore Processing Countries.
- g) A breakdown of information on the flights being made since 7 September 2013:
 - (i) All flights positioned out of Darwin, with passengers originating from Christmas Island.
 - (ii) During the period 7 September 2014 to 28 February 2014, the department conducted 61 transfer operations from Christmas Island to Offshore Processing Centres (OPC) Nauru and Manus Island. Of these 61 flights, 34 were to OPC Nauru and 27 to OPC Manus.
 - (iii) Refuelling may have been facilitated at any combination of Darwin, Port Hedland, Christmas Island, Cairns, Port Moresby and/or Nauru as necessary, depending on the available fuel at each location, the flight path, and the range of the relevant aircraft.
 - (iv) The three aircraft conducting OPC transfers have maximum seating capacities of 120, 120 and 138 passengers.
 - (v) Each transfer flight involves an appropriately sized contingent of security escorts (Serco) depending on the number of transferees on board. A small number of AFP officers and an IHMS nurse escort also accompany each transfer. The airline flight crew comprises between seven and nine persons
 - (vi) The flight schedule is determined on a case by case basis, taking into account wether, airport schedules, fuel availability and other operational factors.
 - (vii) During the period 7 September 2014 to 28 February 2014, the department conducted 61 transfer operations from Christmas Island to Offshore Processing Centres (OPC) Nauru and Manus Island. The number of flights per week ranged from one to five.