

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 01

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Front of House – Individual Airport Requirements

Hansard Pages: 54-55 (24/02/09)

Senator Ian MacDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—On notice, could you sensitively explain the difference between stopping for two minutes to drop off someone and stopping for one minute to pick up someone, whose jurisdiction it is, and against whom would constituents be offending if they ignored these rules.

Mr Tongue—Certainly.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you. On notice, could you sensitively explain the difference between stopping for two minutes to drop off someone and stopping for one minute to pick up someone, whose jurisdiction it is, and against whom would constituents be offending if they ignored these rules.

Answer:

There is a limited capacity for security officers to identify and resolve activity resulting from unattended vehicles, leading to a higher risk profile. The *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004* and the *Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005* require participants to demonstrate that they have developed an integrated, responsible and proactive approach to managing aviation security. Where a person acts in contravention to an approach which has been agreed with the Australian Government, this is an offence against the Commonwealth.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 02

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security
Topic: Maritime Security Identification Card (MSIC)
Hansard Page: 75 (24/02/09)

Senator Williams asked:

Mr Hanna—In September 2007, AusCheck was created within the Attorney-General's Department and they are the agency that does the processing now, and makes the determination of whether someone has an adverse criminal record. It is possible that someone would be convicted of a drug-related offence and not sentenced to imprisonment. That in itself would not constitute a maritime security relevant offence and therefore would not disqualify someone from holding a maritime security identification card.

Senator WILLIAMS—From my notes here, I understand that a figure from late last year indicated that around 10 per cent of those people approved for MSICs had a criminal history. Is this figure accurate?

Mr Hanna—It is the case that a number of individuals in society, in general, have convictions on their criminal history. These also relate to traffic offences and very minor violent offences. So the figures that are quoted for people that have criminal offences also include these minor convictions. The case of individuals with offences is obviously much higher than those that have maritime security relevant offences.

Senator WILLIAMS—So those figures are around 10 per cent. Do you have a more recent figure available on that? (1) I understand the figures from late last year indicated that around 10 per cent of those people approved for MSICs had a criminal history. Are there any more recent figures available on that or do you want to take that on notice?

Mr Tongue—Could we take that on notice and get the results to you, please?

Senator WILLIAMS—No problem at all. (2) Can you give any indication as to what the majority of those allowable offences relate to?

Mr Tongue—Again, Senator, we would take that on notice.

Senator WILLIAMS—Yes. (3) Since the introduction of the MSIC program, can you advise us how many people each financial year have returned a negative security assessment as conducted by ASIO? Do you want to take that on notice as well?

Mr Tongue—Yes, and I'll have to talk to ASIO about that one.

Answer:

1-3 AusCheck is not a unit of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 03

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I refer to the Aviation Security Screening Review. I understand this is a review of the screening system we have in our airports. It is looking at things like national inconsistencies, passenger experience of screening, retention and training of security personal, technological changes and challenges. Is this correct?

Answer:

Yes.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 04

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security
Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening
Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. I note that the Minister, in June 2008, announced the formation of an External Advisory Group to assist this review. Is this when the review started?
2. When did it start?

Answer:

1. No.
2. January 2008.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 05

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security
Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening
Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

How many submissions have been received?

Answer:

354.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 06

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. The Minister's media release of 4 June 2008 stated that the review will be finished in December last year. Has it been finished?
2. Has the report been drafted?
3. Has the Minister considered its recommendations?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. The recommendations will be considered in the development of the Aviation White Paper.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 07

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Air Cargo Security

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I note that the United States proposes to introduce 100% screening of cargo transported on passenger planes by 2010. Is this correct?

Answer:

Yes - from August 2010.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 08

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Air Cargo Security

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Is it correct that 80% of Australian domestic air cargo is carried on passenger aircraft?
2. How much cargo is that, in terms of tonnes, items of weight? Do you have any idea?
3. How much is screened?
4. How much air cargo carried by Australian domestic aircraft is not screened?

Answer:

1. No ABS or industry statistics are produced that quantify the amount of cargo carried on domestic passenger aircraft.
2. No statistics are available that provide this information.
- 3–4 Cargo carried on domestic passenger aircraft is subject to security clearance under the Regulated Air Cargo Agents scheme in accordance with the Aviation Transport Security Act and the Aviation Transport Security Regulations.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 09

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Air Cargo Security

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Does the Government propose to implement the same policy as the US regarding air cargo security screening by 2010?
2. How much would such a policy cost? Has the Department done any costing should such a policy occur?
3. Who will pay for it?

Answer:

- 1–3 The question of further enhancements to existing air cargo security requirements will be addressed in the Government's Aviation Policy White Paper which is to be finalised later this year.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 10

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What sort of regulatory anomalies and national inconsistencies has the Screening Review uncovered in Australia's approach to security screening?
2. Are there jurisdictional inconsistencies that cause inefficiencies in Australia's screening processes?
3. What are they?
4. Are there different approaches to security screening adopted by our major capital city airports?

Answer:

- 1–4 A range of people, process and technology issues affecting Australia's approach to aviation security screening have been examined under the review. Recommendations from the review will be considered in the development of the Aviation White Paper.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 11

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security
Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening
Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

How many security staff are employed in screening operations in Australia?

Answer:

Approximately 3,600.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 12

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. The current economic crisis aside, if the long-term growth in passenger numbers do average four percent a year to 2025, as stated in the Government's National Aviation Policy Green Paper, will there be a shortfall in security screening personnel?
2. What is being done to meet the recruitment and training challenges in aviation security personnel, so that Australia will have sufficient numbers of aviation security staff to meet this increase in projected demand?

Answer:

- 1–2 As stated in the Aviation Green Paper, the Government has reviewed aviation security training requirements, as well as related workforce attraction and retention issues, and is currently considering implementation options for the National Aviation Security Training Program (NASTP). The NASTP covers screening officers as well as other airport workers with a security role. This work has contributed towards the broad Government skilling initiative "Skilling Australia for the Future" where aviation screening has been identified as a Productivity Places Program priority.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 13

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Review of Aviation Security Screening

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. The aviation Green Paper flags that, like the Coalition, the Government is considering a central screening authority to run screening operations in Australia's airports. What are the views on such an approach by stakeholders in the aviation sector?
2. What would be its cost?
3. Would it be funded by further levies on industry?

Answer:

1. Most industry participants do not support this initiative.
2. Not assessed.
3. See answer to Q2.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 14

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. I understand that the Government has completed an Aviation Security Identification Card Review. When did this Review commence?
2. When did it finish?
3. When will the Minister respond to this Review?
4. Will it be publicly available?

Answer:

1. December 2007.
2. December 2008.
3. The Review findings are currently being considered in the context of the National Aviation Policy Statement.
4. The findings of the ASIC Review have been provided to industry and Government stakeholders.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 15

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. The Aviation Security Identification Card is required for employed personal (sic) to obtain unsupervised access to Australian airports. Is this correct?
2. What sort of issues regarding the Card did the Review consider?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. The purpose of the ASIC Review was to examine the current ASIC regime, within the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005, to ensure that it continues to achieve its intended objectives.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 16

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

The aviation Green Paper on page 92 states:

A comprehensive review of the ASIC scheme was recently completed. This review highlighted significant vulnerabilities in the robustness and timeliness of background and proof of identity checks, name-based criminal history checks, and the management of visitors in the secure zones of Australian airports.

Can you please explain in detail what these significant vulnerabilities are?

Answer:

The Government is consulting with industry and relevant stakeholders over the findings of the Review.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 17

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

The aviation Green Paper on page 84 notes that 100,000 individuals require unsupervised access to secure areas of Australian airports. So does this mean that currently there are 100,000 personal (sic) with an Australian Security Identification Card?

Answer:

Yes.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 18

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. How many applications for an ASIC are received each year?
2. How many are rejected?
3. On what basis are they rejected?
4. Of those rejected - how many were on the basis of a criminal history?

Answer:

- 1-4 AusCheck is not a unit of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 19

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

AusCheck, a unit of the Attorney General's Department, is now responsible for coordinating the background checks of ASIC applications. The background check involves scrutiny by authorities such as the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and possibly the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Is this correct?

Answer:

AusCheck is not a unit of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 20

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What is the backlog of applications for an ASIC?
2. What is the average length of time to obtain an ASIC?
3. Is this what the Green Paper meant by "... vulnerabilities in the robustness and timeliness in background and proof of identity checks ..."?

Answer:

- 1-3 AusCheck is not a unit of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 21

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What steps are being taken to meet the projected increase in demand for ASICs?

Answer:

AusCheck is not a unit of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and this is therefore not a matter for this Department.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 22

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Aviation Security Identification Security Card (ASIC) Review

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What are the issues surrounding the management of visitors in the secure zones of Australian airports?

Answer:

The Government is consulting with industry and relevant stakeholders over the findings of the Review.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 23

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Air Security Officer Program (Sky Marshals)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Air Security Officers, colloquially known as ‘sky marshals’ have been providing a security presence on selected Australian domestic flights since 2001 and two years later, according to page 34 of the Australian Federal Police July 2008 edition of their quarterly magazine, “Platypus”, on selected international flights. They are armed and are essentially there to deal with hijackings. Is that correct?

Answer:

The matter is not within the Department’s responsibilities.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 24

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security
Topic: Air Security Officer Program (Sky Marshals)
Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

The 2008-09 Budget the Government allocated \$8.4 million to continue funding for the Air Security Officer program. Is this a reduction?

Answer:

The matter is not within the Department's responsibilities.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 25

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Air Security Officer Program (Sky Marshals)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

In spite of this funding, and in spite of the Aviation Legislation Amendment (2008 Measures No.1) Bill 2008 that was passed last year to clarify the powers of sky marshals to lawfully discharge firearms, there have been persistent reports that the Government is cutting this essential security initiative. Is the Government committed to preserving the Air Security Officers program?

Answer:

The matter is not within the Department's responsibilities.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: OTS 26

Division/Agency: Office of Transport Security

Topic: Air Security Officer Program (Sky Marshals)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Does the Government accept comments reported in the media by Human Services Minister Senator Joe Ludwig early last year (Herald Sun 15/02/08) that the number of sky marshals was to be cut by one-third?
2. Does the Government agree with his comments?
3. What cuts has the Government made to the Air Security Officer program?
4. On what basis has this decision been made?
5. Is it based on a security assessment or purely as a budgetary measure?

Answer:

1–5 The matter is not within the Department's responsibilities.