



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AVIATION TRANSPORT SECURITY
AMENDMENT BILL 2006

Second Reading

SPEECH

Wednesday, 29 March 2006

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Truss, Warren, MP

Source House
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Question No.

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Minister for Transport and Regional Services) (9.50 am)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Aviation security is a high priority for this government and is under constant review to ensure that the regulatory framework is responsive to changing threats to the Australian aviation industry.

The bill is a first step in the review of aviation security legislation that was recommended in the 2005 Wheeler review. The bill was designed in consultation with industry to deal with two pressing operational concerns:

- improving the regulatory arrangements that would apply when a security controlled airport conducts activities that are not part of its usual business; and
- better allowing for the management of cargo examination and handling.

The amendments have been designed to ensure that the legal regulatory framework is better aligned with the actual business and operational practices of aviation industry participants. In both instances, much of the detail will be prescribed in regulations to be developed in consultation with industry. Regulations allow for a more flexible and timely regulatory response in an environment where new risks can emerge without warning.

Managing events

The first set of amendments focuses on managing events and specialised activities at security controlled airports. There are many occasions where airport operators manage events or specialised activities that are outside their usual business. Examples include receiving and farewelling dignitaries at international airports, managing a large commercial venture such as an air show, and hosting a community event at a regional airport.

The existing scheme of airport security zones is well adapted to routine activities, but industry indicated that there is a need for a more flexible structure to manage events. The bill provides for a system of event zones that will make it far easier to appropriately vary or suspend some of the usual security arrangements for the duration of an event. For example, some events are so strictly managed that it is not necessary to require everyone present to wear an aviation security identity card.

The security rules that will apply within an event zone will be tailored to suit the type of event and the perceived level of risk.

A related amendment contained in the bill will make it easier for an aviation industry participant to make simple changes to its transport security program. The existing requirement to formally revise a program when a simple change is needed is unnecessarily cumbersome and tends to discourage the sorts of simple routine alterations that ensure plans fully reflect current operational practice. The new process will be particularly useful to quickly alter a plan so that it is appropriately adapted to managing a forthcoming event.

Cargo handling

The second set of amendments in the bill will further refine the security process for handling domestic and international cargo before it is taken onto an aircraft. The existing Regulated Agent scheme applies to those persons in the business of handling or making arrangements for the transport of cargo to be carried on an aircraft only if they have applied to be a regulated air cargo agent.

The proposed amendments aim to maintain the broad scope of the cargo scheme and introduce a framework for a layered approach to security within that scheme. Subject to operational detail that will be worked out in consultation with industry and specified in the regulations, the scheme will apply to the whole air cargo

supply chain from the point of consignment until upload on an aircraft. In this way, more effective and reliable security procedures can be applied before cargo is consolidated for shipment. The amendments allow for security responsibility to be apportioned to reflect the increasing significance of a threat to aviation as cargo moves along the supply chain towards the aircraft.

By introducing the new concept of an accredited air cargo agent, the bill will allow for different but complementary security measures to be prescribed for different parts of the supply chain. These differing requirements will be based on criteria such as the size, scope and security risk posed by a participant's operations.

The changes are expected to reduce the number of air cargo industry participants who are required to maintain a transport security program, but is likely to increase the number of air cargo industry participants who are regulated under the aviation transport security legislation. This is expected to deliver a more effective security outcome while reducing the overall regulatory burden on the industry.

Overall this bill makes two significant improvements to the aviation security regulatory regime. It is designed to improve security outcomes and to allow for better alignment of regulations with actual operations.

I commend the bill to the House and present the explanatory memorandum.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Crean**) adjourned.