

2 April 2015

AVIATION ASSOCIATIONS TELL CASA TO FOCUS ON COST CUTTING FIRST

The Australian Aviation Associations Forum (TAAAF) has responded to a CASA draft Cost Recovery Implementation Strategy (CRIS) by telling the regulator to tighten its belt, become more efficient and review those of its activities that contribute little to aviation safety.

At a time when many aviation industry sectors are suffering a significant economic downturn due to the end of the mining boom, drought in two States and a multi-decade general decline in activity, all parts of the industry have had to tighten their belts and CASA's regulatory services should not be immune.

On one side sits the Government's budget predicament, Government's red tape reduction plan, the Government direction regarding new regulations having to be cost neutral on industry and the Government's announced adoption of most of the recommendations of the highly critical Forsyth Aviation Review.

In this environment it is not appropriate for CASA to propose some 90 new charges related to the bungled new Part 61 for pilot licensing, and to maintain complex bureaucratic systems that fail to deliver efficiency. Industry has concerns about the lack of urgency in reform and denial of the Forsyth report criticisms by a cohort of long term managers within CASA.

The new CASA Director of Aviation and the revamped Board are clearly engaged and focused on the challenging job at hand. They should make no mistake as to industry's hostile reception of the CRIS proposal to simply increase charges before an attempt to improve efficiency.

Unfortunately, the Minister's critical letter of expectations to CASA is still missing in action and this needs to be remedied urgently. That letter should include a clear direction for CASA to reduce costs, up to and including a reduction in staff.

Participants in the Forum ask Deputy Prime Minister Truss to:

- Reject the draft Cost Recovery Implementation Strategy (CRIS)
- Refer CASA to the Government directive that new regulations should be cost neutral
- Refer CASA to the Government policy on red tape reduction
- Direct CASA to implement the Government's response to the Forsyth Report
- Include a direction in his Letter of Expectations that CASA focus on cost reduction before more cost recovery
- Direct CASA to establish a joint industry/CASA taskforce to review all charges and the efficiency of the systems behind them, with a view to eliminating activities and their accompanying charges where they make no contribution to safety.

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