

REFORMING FLIGHT TRAINING

A policy paper from The Australian Aviation Associations' Forum

Issue

The current CASA pilot licencing and training regulations (CASR Parts 61, 141, 142) impose undue complexity and cost on the aviation industry that will lead to a significant reduction in training capacity.

There are four main issues involved:

1. Candidates attending a CASA approved flying training school (as distinct from an RTO or University aviation degree course) are not eligible for participation in HECS or any other government debt support scheme.
2. The indemnity provided to ATOs is potentially to be abolished with any transfer of Authorised Testing Officers delegations to the new CASR Part 61 Flight Examiner Rating.
3. CASR Parts 61/141/142 impose significant new requirements on training organisations and individuals which is likely to lead to a significant reduction in training capacity for the industry, especially in highly specialised areas.
4. Recently the Federal Government tightened eligibility for 457 visas, which has the potential to restrict the industry's capacity to manage access to qualified overseas personnel.

This combination is leading to pilot shortages in various areas, a reduction in the operations of existing flight training schools, a restriction on availability of specialised training, and an overall reduction in capabilities across the industry.

Background

The aviation industry has invested considerable amount of work in the development of the CASA pilot licencing and training regulations and, although agreement was reached on the principles underpinning the regulation, what emerged some 10 years later was a 1400 page regulation that enlarged the original agreed intent and added complexity and cost.

Although a joint industry/CASA taskforce was established to review the regulations and which made a number of important amendments and exemptions, it was not provided the opportunity to conduct a root and branch review of the regulations.

Recommendation

TAAAF recommends that:

1. The CASA Aviation Safety Advisory Panel establish, as a priority, a joint industry/CASA review of CASR Part 61, 141 and 142 with an aim of reducing complexity and cost on industry, harmonising with international peers, exploring more efficient means of delivering training, especially in highly specialised sectors and seeking expert input from aviation peak bodies. This task should be completed within three months.
2. The Government provide access to a HECS type scheme for Commercial Pilots Licence candidates and those undertaking operational ratings.
3. That when the Federal Government next reviews the 457 Visa issue it take steps to simplify aviation industry access to relevant visas in order to maintain an exchange of international expertise and to allow greater flexibility in highly specialised aviation sectors.