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## Senate Budget Estimates Hearings – May 2015

SB15-000128

**COCKPIT SAFETY AND SECURITY****Key Points**

- On 30 March 2015, Australia’s major international, domestic and regional airlines committed to immediately update their standard operating procedures to require two members of the operating crew or authorised persons on the flight deck at all times.
- There were no regulatory changes required to implement these arrangements.
- The arrangements will be formally reviewed after 12 months by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), in consultation with the Department and the aviation industry.
- As the investigation into the tragic loss of the Germanwings flight 4U9525 proceeds, Government aviation agencies will work with the Australian aviation industry and airline staff to identify further improvements to the safety and security of aircraft cockpits as appropriate.
- Australia will also actively engage in the international consideration of these matters through participation in relevant International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) forums.

**Sensitivities**

On 31 March 2015, Rex Airlines publicly indicated they already required the carriage of two crew members on the flight deck at all times on all of their operations with cabin crew and that the requirement could be applied to all regular public transport flight attendants with a flight attendant.

s33(a)(i)

**Background**

On 24 March 2015 an Airbus A320 operated by Germanwings crashed in the French Alps. All passengers and crew were killed. There were two Australians on board – mother and son, Carol and Greig Friday.

French investigators have stated that the co-pilot, Mr Andreas Lubitz, deliberately crashed the aircraft. Analysis of the black box data suggests that the pilot in command, Captain Patrick Sondenheimer, was unable to enter the flight deck as Mr Lubitz disabled the cockpit entry panel.

On 6 May 2015, the French investigation agency released its preliminary report, making a number of preliminary findings, including in relation to the mental health and licensing of the co-pilot, discussed further below.

*Australian Response*

s47E(d)

The arrangement applies to all Australian regular public transport services where the aircraft has seating capacity for 50 passengers and above and where there is two or more cabin crew on board. These arrangements will be formally reviewed after 12 months by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), in consultation with the Department and the aviation industry.

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As the investigation into the tragic loss of the Germanwings flight 4U9525 proceeds Government aviation agencies will work with the Australian aviation industry and airline staff to identify further improvements to the safety and security of aircraft cockpits as appropriate.

This work will look at medical testing and reporting, including mental health assessments, and related requirements for flight crew members.

### *International Response*

The actions taken by Australian airlines in relation to two persons in the cockpit at all times are consistent with approaches by other countries including the United States, Canada, the European Union, India and New Zealand.

Australian officials will be actively engaging in the international consideration of any updating of aviation safety and security standards and recommended practices arising out of the investigation into the loss of the aircraft, through the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Australian officials attended the ICAO Aviation Security Panel meeting in Montreal in the week beginning Monday 13 April 2015. s33(a), s33(b)

### *Mental Health Assessment and Reporting*

A preliminary finding (Preliminary Report issued on 6 May 2015) of the French investigation agency was that the co-pilot had an episode of depression and was taking medication to treat that condition which delayed the renewal of his Class 1 Medical Certificate between April and July 2009. Subsequently, the Medical Certificate was issued in July 2009 with conditions, reportedly that Mr Lubitz submit to regular medical examinations.

Australian aviation agencies, in consultation with the aviation industry and key stakeholders including airline staff associations, will examine medical testing and reporting issues, including mental health assessments, related to flight crew members.

This work will be informed by the outcomes of the investigation into flight 4U9525.

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**Contact:** Jim Wolfe

**Phone:** 5  
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**Cleared by Executive Director:** John Doherty

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