

CASA restructure: regulator cuts divisions in revamp

• The Australian November 27, 2015 12:00AM

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CASA's Mark Skidmore said the restructure aimed to cut the time people spent dealing with the regulator.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority is streamlining its operations into three groups in a bid to improve its regulatory services and promote better interaction with the aviation community.

Staff were told yesterday of the restructure, which comes after the authority has been under fire recently for not moving more quickly to fix regulatory changes that have upset sections of the industry. CASA has also been criticised for being slow to adopt government-endorsed recommendations from the Aviation Safety Regulation Review.

The changes are due to take place by the middle of next year and will collapse six existing operational groups into three under the broader headings of stakeholder engagement, aviation and sustainability.

The changes are designed to address recommendation 21 of the ASRR, which proposes that CASA change its organisational structure to a "client-oriented output model". The review panel said it was struck by the number of industry concerns about communication and specialist guidance, many of which appeared to relate to the authority's structure.

It determined that many of these issues could be resolved with a more transparent organisational structure and management focus on specific industry sector operations.

The three main sections proposed by yesterday's restructure will see six groups consolidated into three with legal services remaining separate.

It is understood the standards, operations and airspace/aerodrome sections will be consolidated into the aviation group. Aviation group functions will include entry control, surveillance, regulatory services and standard setting as well as regulatory development and implementation.

The stakeholder engagement group will include safety, education and promotions as well as functions now in the office of the director, such as media relations. The authority said this would join communications functions into one area to ensure the information it issued was "consistent and delivered effectively".

Corporate services and some functions of the industry permissions section will go into the sustainability group.

Materials released to staff said job cuts were not anticipated beyond senior management.

CASA boss Mark Skidmore said an important goal of the restructure was to reduce the time people and organisations spent dealing with the regulator.

He said he understood the way CASA interacted with the industry needed to improve "at all levels" and the restructure was a vital step in renewing the authority.

"CASA has been consulting widely and often over the past year and now is the time to start delivering real change," he said.

"Part of this real change will be the introduction of more online services to streamline the application, processing and delivery of as many services as possible.

"The restructure will be done in stages between now and the middle of 2016 so regulatory and safety support for the aviation community is not disrupted.

"These changes will streamline CASA's senior management and give all staff a clearer focus on CASA's goals and their own tasks."

Meanwhile, CASA will push ahead with controversial fatigue-management rules, despite trenchant opposition from some parts of the industry, but it confirmed a previously flagged delay to May 2017, to give operators more time to transition to the new rules. The change to Civil Aviation Order 48.1 has been supported by airline pilots but attacked by associations representing some operators.

Regional Express estimated earlier this month the changes would cost it more than \$4 million annually and could make some routes unviable, while umbrella group The Australian Aviation Association Forum urged CASA to withdraw CAO 48.1.

CASA admitted this week that consultation with the aviation community found "both CASA and air operators needed more time to make a smooth and safe transition" to the new rules.

Operators who had not completed the transition by October 31 would need to submit amended operations manuals or a fatigue risk management application by that date, it said.

Extracted from:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/aviation/casa-restructure-regulator-cuts-divisions-in-revamp/news-story/df2da1e8b868c36b60fb5bd7b881de88>

On 05/05/16 at 10:54:05