

## **Report recommends solution-driven approach to aircraft noise**

The Commonwealth Aircraft Noise Ombudsman has called for a more solution-driven approach to aircraft noise complaints following a major report which examined Airservices Australia's complaint handling processes.

In releasing his review of Airservices Australia's handling of noise complaints, the Ombudsman, Ron Brent, said the review proposed significant changes to the way complaints are handled and recorded. Airservices Australia has acknowledged the need to improve these processes.

"There needs to be a fundamental shift in the approach to aircraft noise complaints, from simply giving out information to looking for solutions" Mr Brent said.

"By adopting a solution-driven approach it is more likely that cases where something can be changed will be identified. At the same time, it is important that information provided to complainants responds specifically to the issues raised in each individual case."

He said the report found that while noise could be reduced or stopped in only a few cases, there was a need to better explain why the noise was occurring.

The other major focus of the report was to review the way complaint information is recorded and used. Currently each contact made by a complainant is recorded as a separate complaint. For example, one call about a number of separate issues is recorded as one complaint, while a call every time a plane flies over is recorded as a separate complaint despite it being the same underlying issue. In some cases this results in over 1000 complaints a month recorded for a single complainant.

The report recommends that the focus should shift to an increased emphasis on the underlying issues. The benefits of this will be that Airservices Australia can devote more resources to investigating and resolving complaints, and complainants won't feel obliged to spend excessive time and effort lodging many complaints to have ongoing or recurring issues addressed.

"This would deliver more useful data on the issues concerning people and the number of people affected. Improving this data would support improved noise management."

"Airservices Australia has committed to adopting the 18 recommendations in the report. This will help the organisation and the Government better understand and respond to the issues that concern complainants, and ultimately to deliver better outcomes on noise," Mr Brent said.

The report is available on the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's website at [www.ano.gov.au](http://www.ano.gov.au).

For further information please contact:

Meg Dixon-Child  
0400 520 424