

ANO assessment of Airservices Australia's response to the Review of Complaints Handling

February 2012

1 Overview

- 1.1 This report outlines the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's (ANO) assessment of progress in implementation of recommendations arising from the ANO's *Review of Complaints Handling - Airservices Australia*. The review, released in February 2011, was the first review completed by the ANO office following its establishment in September 2010.
- 1.2 In the review, the ANO made 18 recommendations, all of which were accepted by Airservices Australia (Airservices). Although there were delays before implementation began, Airservices is now making good progress responding to the recommendations.
- 1.3 **Attachment 1** records the ANO's assessment of action against the recommendations. One year on, 14 recommendations have been actioned by Airservices with work commenced on the remaining four.
- 1.4 The ANO office will continue to monitor the:
- successful implementation of all the review recommendations; and
 - application of new processes and initiatives.
- Progress on recommendations that are either incomplete, or require further monitoring, will be reported in future quarterly reports.
- 1.5 The ANO is pleased that Airservices has shown a strong commitment to the implementation of the recommendations, and that the Board of Airservices has taken an active interest in monitoring progress. The benefits of the recommendations will still take some time to be fully realised but will improve responsiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness of aircraft noise complaints handling.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
21 February 2012

Attachment 1 - ANO Report on Complaints Handling Review Recommendations

Recommendation	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Airservices should amend its systems and procedures to support the NEU seeking a suitable remedy for those complaints where it may be possible to improve the noise outcome, and ensure follow-up on such opportunities. It is acknowledged that an improved noise outcome may only be feasible for a small minority of the total noise complaints received.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Airservices should amend the objectives of the NEU, as stated in the NEU procedures, to include 'complaint resolution through the provision of more targeted information'. In addition, Airservices should develop and implement systems and tools to assist with this new objective.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Airservices should make a senior manager accountable for capturing, recording and tracking through to implementation, noise improvement opportunities arising from complaints.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO is will monitor the effectiveness of the system being used for the capture, recording, and tracking of noise improvement opportunities.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>Airservices should review the resource requirement for the NEU when implementing the changes recommended in this review.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>Airservices, in adopting the other recommendations included within this review, should amend the name of the NEU to Noise Complaints Unit (NCU) or similar to reflect the unit's role in resolving complaints.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 6:</p> <p>Airservices should review and expand their written procedures and protocols for responding to unreasonable complainant behaviours.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 7:</p> <p>Airservices should update and enhance their suite of fact sheets to cover all major airports in Australia and the key aircraft noise issues of interest to the general public. Airservices should publish these on their website, as well as disseminate them to specific complainants as appropriate. In addition, the remainder of the Airservices noise information website should be reviewed and updated where appropriate.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will monitor and support the development of fact sheets for major airports and will provide input to improve the content of fact sheets that have already been published.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8:</p> <p>Airservices should amend NEU procedures and other relevant instructions to ensure that ownership of all noise complaints remains with the NEU (or those responsible for the NEU). Where complainants are put in direct contact with ATCs, the ATCs should be advised of the requirement for all communication to be reported to and managed by the NEU. Where complaints are handled by higher levels of management or other parts of Airservices (such as the Government and International Relations branch for approaches via the Minister's Office or the Department of Infrastructure and Transport) the feedback loop must be closed so that the NEU can ensure consistency in their responses to complainants.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>

Recommendation	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Recommendation 9: Airservices should amend NEU procedures, and other relevant organisational instructions, to:</p> <p>a) have all complaints logged and managed by the NEU, even where the NEU judges that the matter can best be handled by direct dealings between the complainant and staff from another part of Airservices, and</p> <p>b) allow the NEU to instigate an investigation of any complaint or consider systemic issues arising from any complaint, where this is appropriate.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Airservices should engage actively with other agencies with cross-over accountabilities in aircraft noise issues, and also with airports and aircraft operators as required, to ensure an improved and integrated response is provided to complainants.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: Airservices should establish a training package, and relevant supporting material, to assist managers and key decision makers in recognising the value of complaints and the manner in which they can contribute to system and service improvements.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: Airservices should implement processes for the NEU that ensure investigations are conducted whenever there is a possibility of individual, systemic or emerging issues being identified that could feed into improved aircraft noise management.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p>
<p>Recommendation 13: Airservices should place greater focus on identifying, recording and reporting issues in addition to reporting the numbers of complaints and complainants. The key indicators that should inform an understanding of complaints should be the issues raised, and the number of persons who have complained about those issues, rather than the number of times individuals have contacted the NEU about a particular issue.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will monitor the new initiatives as they are rolled out across all public reports.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: Airservices should develop clear messages on key issues that provide a realistic picture of what is, and what is not, likely to be achievable. Matters of government policy should be cleared in advance with the Minister.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: Airservices should implement processes to ensure that issues identified through complaints are followed up, through the process of consideration, decision and where appropriate, implementation.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16: Airservices should give priority to the replacement of the NEU complaints database with a system capable of providing more sophisticated analysis of complaint data.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17: Airservices should develop a formal, written and published instruction on recording relevant statistical details about issues, complaints, complainants and contacts.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18: Airservices should develop a standard clause relating to the minimisation of noise, for inclusion in operational Letters of Agreement with aircraft operators, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>