



Annual Report

2013-2014

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ANO contact

Website: www.ano.gov.au

Email: ano@ano.gov.au

Freecall: 1800 266 040

Write to: Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
GPO Box 1985
Canberra City ACT 2601

1 From the Ombudsman

“The past 12 months have been highly satisfying, with positive progress in all areas of the ANO charter.”



1.1 I have been greatly encouraged by the steps taken in the past twelve months. This includes both with the way the ANO office is managing our activities and the way Airservices Australia (Airservices) is improving its management of aircraft noise issues.

1.2 Our key achievements in 2013-14 include implementation of our first software-based complaints management system, publication of another major review aimed at improving Airservices' management of complaints, and finalisation of a number of long-standing cases that were awaiting effective investigations by Airservices of potential noise improvements. Additionally, I am delighted that eight noise improvement opportunities have been finalised in these past 12 months as a response to complaints handled by the ANO office. I am equally pleased that Airservices is now more readily identifying noise improvement opportunities without our intervention.

“Eight noise improvement opportunities have been finalised in these past 12 months”

1.3 The ANO provides independent administrative reviews of Airservices' management of aircraft noise issues, specifically focussed on three areas:

- Complaint handling
- Information presentation and distribution
- Consultation

Our work with Airservices is consequently structured around these three areas, so I will briefly summarise the year for each below.

Complaint handling

1.4 The number of complaints to the ANO office increased during 2013-14, with the average number of complaints per month rising from just over seven last year to almost nine per month, much closer to the longer term trend. Notably, a significantly larger number of the complaints received this year were able to be referred to Airservices for a direct response (34 compared with only 9 referred last year). In many cases these were referred because complainants had not fully explored their concerns with Airservices or had not gone back to Airservices with their new issues. It is also a reflection of the maturing of Airservices' complaint management culture that we can confidently ask complainants to go back to Airservices. **Attachment 1** provides a summary of the ANO complaint statistics for 2013-14.

1.5 As mentioned on the previous page, eight noise improvement opportunities have been finalised in these past 12 months as a response to complaints handled by the ANO office. Following our investigation, Airservices re-considered ways to manage the aircraft noise issues in an area, often in consultation with aircraft and/or airport operators. Of the opportunities explored, two resulted in no feasible change being identified in the near future, but in the remaining six a change could be made leading to a noise improvement (albeit often at the margins). All opportunities identified through complaints are reported in the ANO quarterly reports and a summary is available in **Attachment 2**.

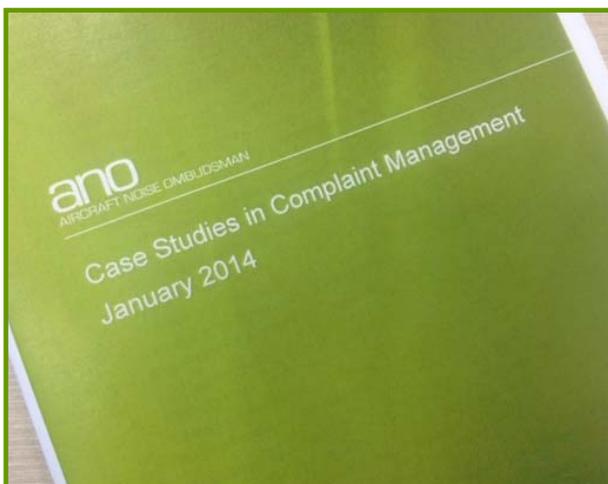
1.6 Last year I was thrilled to be able to report a dramatic decrease in the number of contacts Airservices was receiving. I am pleased to see the drop in unnecessary repeat contacts from complainants has been sustained in 2013-14. Further discussion of this issue is available in sections 2.20 to 2.24 of this report. I look forward to further enhancements by Airservices in 2014-15 that will help to embed processes that discourage repeated contact by complainants on issues that have been fully addressed. The key benefits of this improvement are that it saves the complainant time and effort, and also frees up Airservices' resources to work on:

- improving responses to complaints
- identifying noise improvement opportunities
- enhancing the information available to the community about aircraft noise issues.

1.7 Airservices continues to make solid progress in complaint management. With the release of our *Case Studies in Complaint Management Review* in January 2014 we made six recommendations to the Board of Airservices aimed at improving Airservices' management of complaints across a range of issues. It seeks:

- reform in complaint record management
- better alignment of, and quality assurance in systems, processes and practices
- improved information provision and reporting based on complaint data.

Airservices has closed three parts of two recommendations. **Attachment 3** outlines the ANO's assessment of action on each recommendation.



“Case Studies in Complaint Management Review made six recommendations aimed at improving Airservices’ management of complaints”

Consultation

1.8 ANO staff attend a variety of community and industry forums across Australia to monitor Airservices' consultation and information provision and to gather information about emerging aircraft noise issues.

“ANO staff attend community and industry forums across Australia”

1.9 As with previous years, we have not made any formal recommendations to Airservices on their consultation activities. We provide feedback as appropriate and monitor Airservices' consultation activities for alignment with its Communications and Consultation Protocol and community expectations.

Information provision

1.10 Information provision is an important component of managing aircraft noise issues and is a key focus for the ANO. For this reason I accepted nomination as Chair of the Australian Standards committee reviewing the Australian Standard AS2021-2000: Acoustics — Aircraft noise intrusion — Building siting and construction. The review is limited in scope, however, I have also proposed, on behalf of the committee, the development of a Standards Australia guidance document about aircraft noise information provision. I am pleased that my proposal was approved by the Standards Australia Board and the guidance document will be developed in the coming year.



“I have proposed development of a Standards Australia publication about aircraft noise information”

1.11 Airservices has continued to work on actions to address the three recommendations from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney, February 2012* that were not yet finalised at the start of the 2013-14 financial year. Two have now been finalised, with action well underway to address the last of these recommendations. **Attachment 3** outlines the ANO's assessment of action on each recommendation.

1.12 The successful implementation of the software-based ANO Complaints System (ANOCS) was a significant piece of work undertaken during 2013-14 in the ANO office. A great team effort led to a smooth transition process, with no interruption to the service provided to complainants. The new system has delivered beyond expectations, with significant efficiencies in time and administration effort in managing our complaints.

Final remarks

“The ANO operates with independence and impartiality”

1.13 To ensure that the ANO operates with independence and impartiality, the position reports directly to the Board of Airservices. It is not part of Airservices’ executive or management structures. As the Ombudsman, I am not an employee of Airservices and I report directly to the Board under the terms of a contract and Charter that establish my role as independent from any form of direction, influence, or control beyond the terms of the ANO Charter.

1.14 I am thrilled to have been reappointed at the end of 2013 to the role of Aircraft Noise Ombudsman for an additional three year term. When I reflect on the first three years I am proud of the achievements we have made. In particular I count the shift in Airservices’ approach to complaints, Airservices’ Strategic Noise Improvement Plan, and the noise improvements that have been pursued as a direct result of the ANO’s interventions as key highlights.

1.15 In noting achievements, I must acknowledge the strong support provided by the Chair and Directors of the Board of Airservices, and the positive way that the staff and management of Airservices has engaged with the office. Further, we would not have achieved the significant outcomes we have without the continued commitment and professionalism of the small and dedicated ANO team. It is my honour and pleasure to work with this exceptional team and I commend them in the highest terms.

1.16 I remain both grateful for and inspired by the insights and contributions of community members. Through their complaints and engagement in the various community forums, we are able to work with Airservices and other stakeholders to analyse the issues raised and in some cases identify opportunities for aircraft noise improvements.

“I am grateful for and inspired by the insights and contributions of community members”

1.17 While we cannot fix every problem, and aircraft noise will continue to be an issue for many, I am continually heartened by the opportunities to help people. Even when the only thing we can do is to provide a resident with a clearer understanding of the noise situation in their area, I am confident that the information we provide can in some small way help them to better manage the noise issues they are experiencing. I look forward to continuing our work with Airservices, the community and other stakeholders as we look for better ways to manage the aircraft noise issues in Australia.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
4 August 2014

2 Activities

Complaints

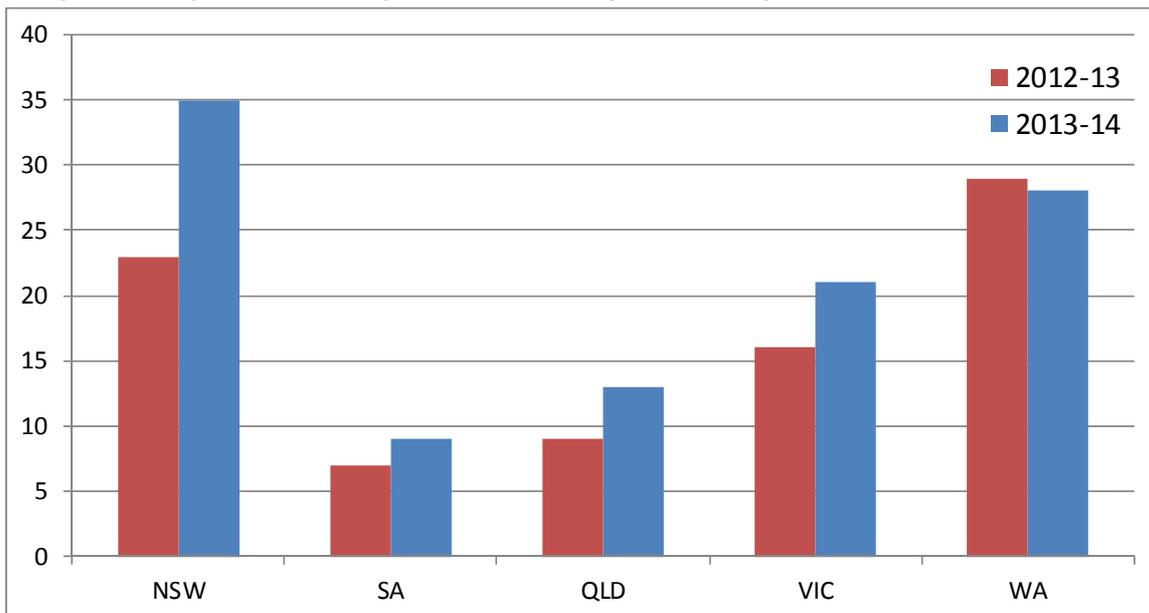
2.1 The ANO has received more complaints in 2013-14 than in the previous year.

Table 1: Comparative complaint statistics by financial year

	Total fin. year	Ave per month	% Change
Sep 2010-Jun 2011 (10 mths)	101	10.1	
Jul 2011-Jun 2012 (12 mths)	109	9.1	↓ 10.1%
Jul 2012-Jun 2013 (12 mths)	88	7.3	↓ 19.3%
Jul 2013-Jun 2014 (12 mths)	106	8.8	↑ 20.5%

2.2 This increase is in line with the almost 20% rise in the number of complainants that contacted Airservices Australia in 2013-14 compared to the previous 12 month period. We also looked into where the complaints were coming from and it can be seen from the graph below that there has been a general increase in complaints across all states (no complaints were received from the ACT, NT or Tasmania in 2013-14). The greater increase in the NSW region may reflect an increased public awareness of aircraft noise issues due to the media attention about a second Sydney Airport.

Graph 1: Comparison of complaints received by the ANO by State



2.3 We started the financial year with 22 open complaints and received a further 106 during the year, making the total number of complaints handled in the financial year 128. This is up a little on the 120 we had in the previous two financial years. Of these, 114 were closed, 75 of which were reviewed (that is, investigated in detail).

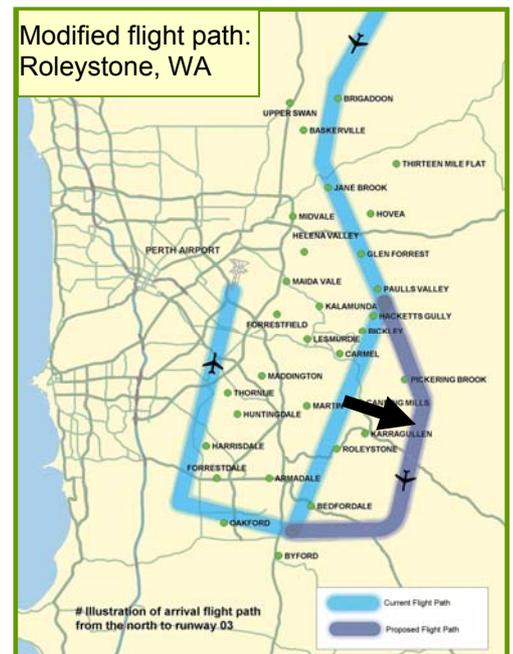
Table 2: Outcome of complaints reviewed by the ANO in 2013-14

Complaints reviewed and closed:	75	
No change possible - explanation provided	64	85.3%
Change adopted by Airservices Australia	5	6.7%
Change adopted by Airport operator	2	2.7%
Change adopted by Operator	4	5.3%

2.4 As with previous years, a majority of the complaints reviewed were closed without any change being possible (85.3%). In these cases, complainants are provided with comprehensive explanations of why no change is possible. Generally, this is because safety or other operational factors require aircraft to fly where they do, or because changing where the aircraft fly would simply move the noise impacts to other residents and would not provide an overall noise improvement.

2.5 Changes made this financial year by Airservices in response to complaints made to the ANO were all in the Perth region, responding to complaints about flights over Roleystone and Chidlow. Both areas were affected by a change to the airspace configuration implemented in November 2008, which resulted in new aircraft noise over these suburbs (among others):

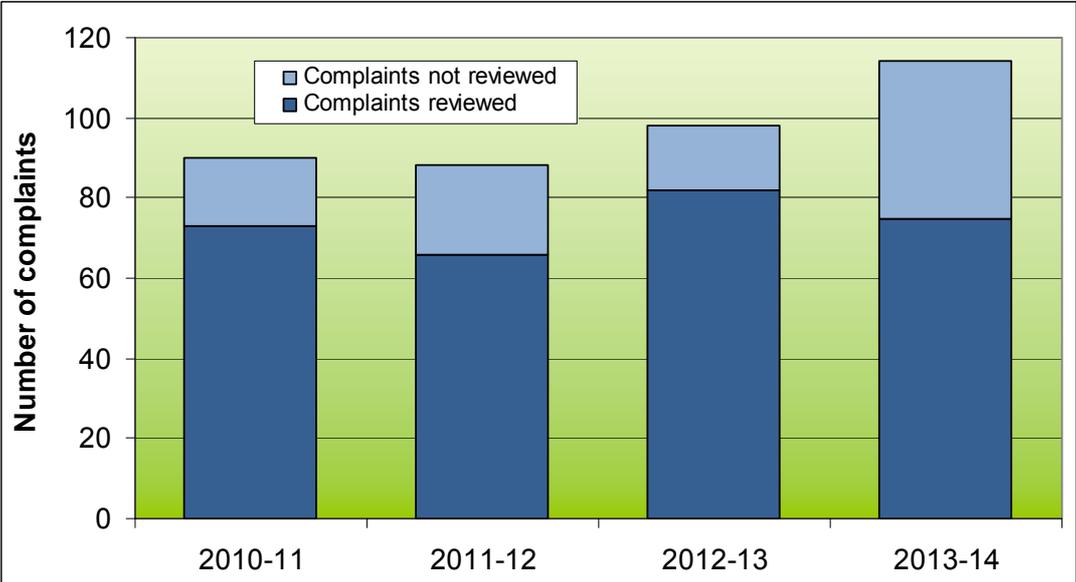
- For Roleystone and nearby suburbs, Airservices has implemented a 12 month trial flight path that has reduced the number of flights over Roleystone, particularly at night as it is the instrument approach path that was moved. Visual approaches will still overfly the area.
- For Chidlow, Airservices has explored a number of potential noise improvements, with several proving not feasible. One proposal has progressed to a three month trial of changed procedures for departing aircraft. The results are yet to be formally published, although the ANO has been advised the trial has improved noise outcomes in Chidlow.



2.6 The remaining 39 complaints were carefully considered however were not reviewed. In these cases, they were referred directly to Airservices for management, related to matters that fell outside our charter, or the complainant did not provide any further information to enable the investigation to proceed.

2.7 We closed more complaints this financial year than in previous years, due to the finalisation of a number of long-standing complaints and the number that we were able to refer to Airservices to respond directly to the complainant.

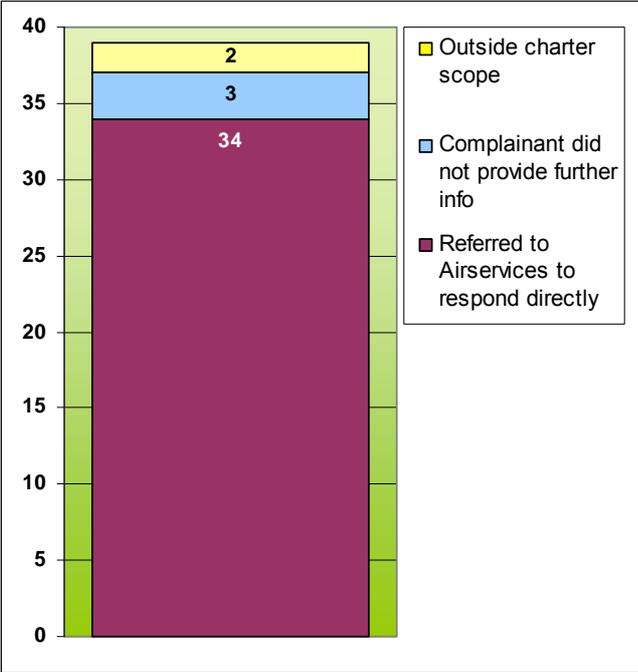
Graph 2: ANO closed complaints by financial year



2.8 Decisions to review complaints are firstly based on whether or not the complaint is within our charter. If not, we endeavour to direct the complainant to the appropriate agency or organisation for their concerns. Just two complaints received in the 12 month period were outside of our charter scope.

2.9 For complaints that are in scope, we cannot review a complaint when a complainant does not provide sufficient information as requested to enable an investigation of the issues.

Graph 3: 2013-14 Complaints not reviewed



2.10 Additionally, we will refer the complaint back to Airservices to respond directly when:

- a complainant has not raised the specific issues with Airservices,
- a complainant has not allowed enough time for Airservices to respond, or
- we consider that Airservices is likely to be able to manage the complaint effectively.

Although there can be some significant work involved in the preliminary consideration of these complaints, we categorise them as “Not reviewed – referred to Airservices to respond directly”.

2.11 Fourteen complaints remained open at the end of the financial year and will be carried forward. **Attachment 1** summarises the year’s complaint statistics.

How long for complaints to be reviewed?

2.12 For the 2013-14 financial year, the average number of days from the complaint received date to complaint closed date was 96 days (compared with the 2012-13 average of 59 days).

2.13 The significant increase is a result of a number of long-standing complaints being closed in this period – the longest of which was a complaint first lodged with the ANO office in early November 2010. The following provides some discussion and analysis of the ‘days to closure’ data for this financial year. Please note that throughout this section we refer to days to closure, which includes weekends and public holidays.

Table 3: ANO complaints closed in 2013-14 by outcome category, with days to closure

Reviewed complaints:	Number of complaints	Days to closure	
		Average	Range
No possible change: explanation given	64	82	21-655
Change adopted by Airservices	5	687	519-1071
Change adopted by Airport operator	2	191	21-361
Change adopted by Operator	4	162	28-427
Complaints not reviewed:			
Referred to Airservices to respond directly	34	30	21-59
Complainant did not provide further info	3	26	21-32
Outside Charter Scope	2	29	22-36

2.14 The table above shows the complaints closed in the period 2013-14 split by outcome category, within the two broad areas of complaints reviewed and complaints not reviewed. For each outcome category it shows both the average and the range of days to closure, meaning the number of days from the date the complaint was received to the date it was closed.

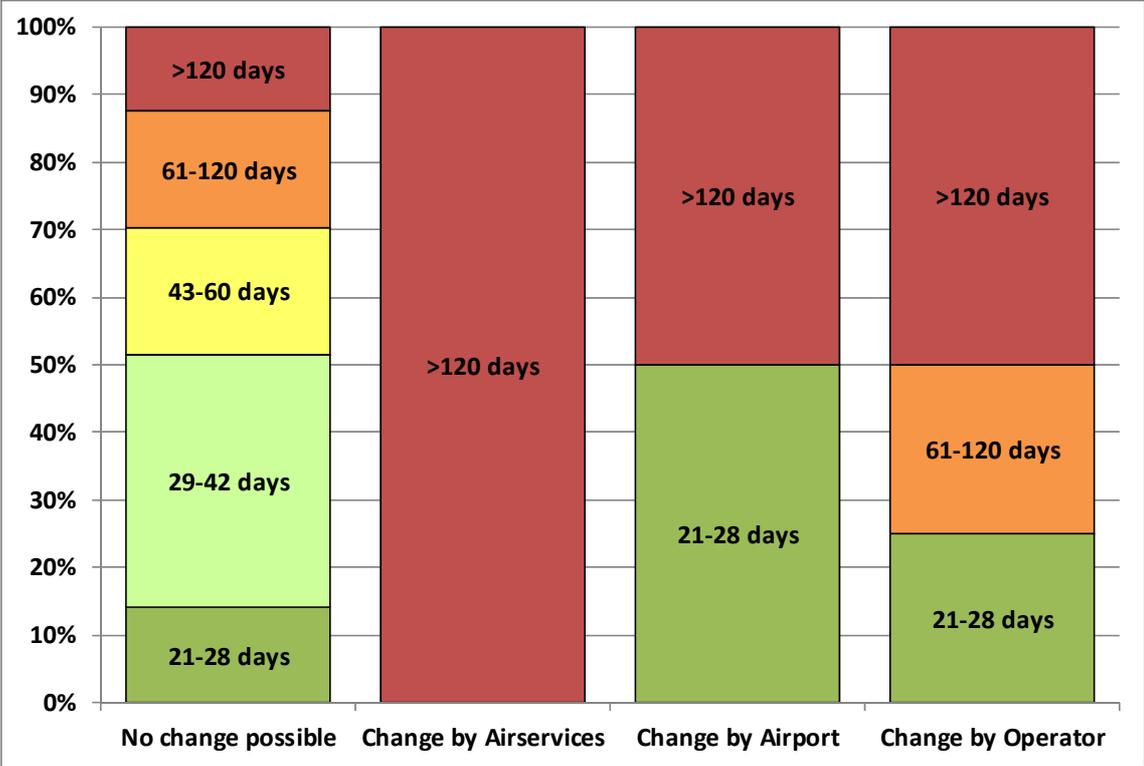
2.15 Complaints closed during the 2013-14 financial year include 21 of the 22 complaints that were open and carried forward from the 2012-13 financial year. Eleven of these had already been open for more than 120 days at the start of the financial year.

2.16 The ANO commits to responding to complaints within 21 days from acknowledgement of the complaint. Once a review is completed and a final response sent to the complainant, we keep the complaint file open for a further 21 days. This approach can be seen in the “range” data in the table above, which shows that the fewest number of days a complaint is open with the ANO is 21 days.

“The ANO commits to responding to complaints within 21 days from acknowledgement”

2.17 Of the 64 complaints reviewed where no practical short to medium term change was identified (the “No change possible” category in the graph below), 70% were closed within 60 days. Despite this, and that all cases not reviewed were closed inside 60 days from receipt, the very long-standing complaints have led to the overall average time for closure exceeding 90 days.

Graph 4: Complaints reviewed by the ANO – percentage split by days to closure range



2.18 Where a potential noise improvement opportunity is identified this can often require a detailed process of consideration. For example, it may involve the conduct of a trial for a change in procedures or flight paths, potentially requiring many months of design, planning, consultation, implementation and review. The ANO kept a number of complaints open until we were satisfied that Airservices had a process underway to properly explore the opportunity. In some instances, such long-term investigations result in no change being possible after all. This explains some of the cases in the “No change possible” category that took greater than 120 days to closure. Not surprisingly, the cases where changes were implemented (the three “Change” columns in Graph 4) were most commonly after extended periods.

Why does change take so long?

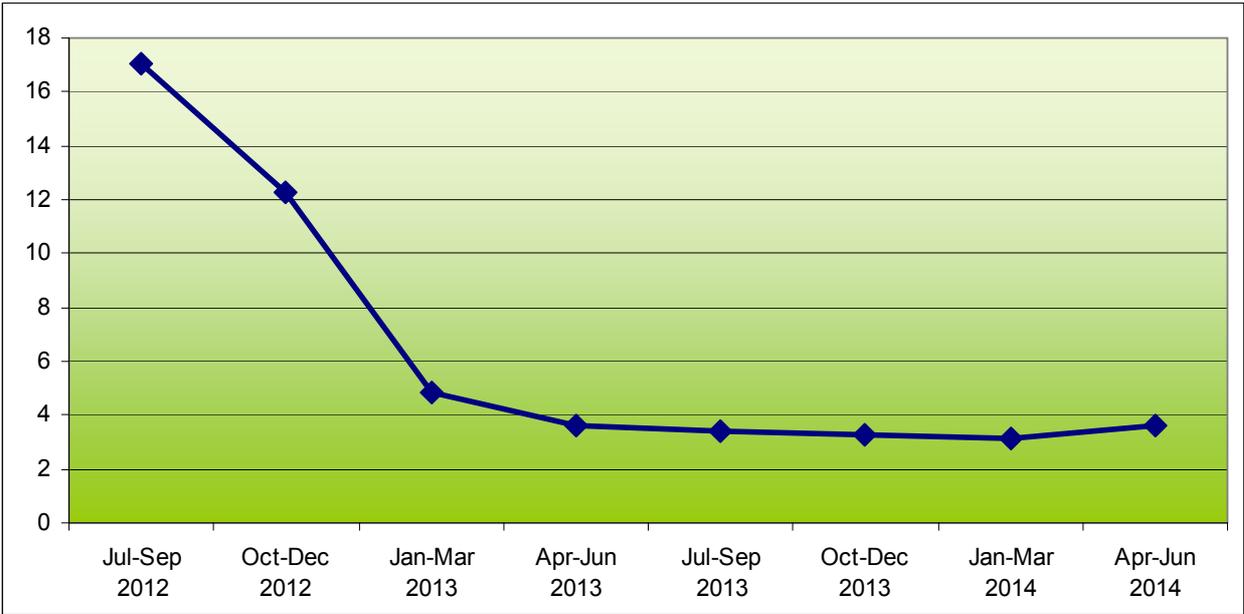
- **Safety:** Airservices and the aviation industry consider safety as the most important consideration. In this environment any change must be carefully considered and meticulously planned to assure safety at all times.
- **Consultation:** Airservices takes seriously its commitment to consult widely on changes. This includes with members of the community as well as with other aviation industry stakeholders. Such processes can take time.
- **New procedures and training:** For many changes there is a need for new procedures and training. Aeronautical publications run to a standard cycle. Training teams of shift workers can take time.

2.19 Another key factor is that, when opportunities were first identified, Airservices was not set-up to evaluate these opportunities and needed to establish new internal systems. With these processes and systems now well-established, including Airservices' Strategic Noise Improvement Plan (see section 3.3), noise improvement opportunities are being prioritised and managed in a more effective and timely way.

Reducing contacts to Airservices

2.20 Last year we reported on the dramatic reduction in the number of contacts Airservices had received per complainant. We are pleased to report that Airservices' average contacts per complainant rate has continued at less than four over each of the four quarters of the 2013-14 financial year. This result is particularly promising given the number of complainants making contact with Airservices in the 2013-14 financial year was almost 20% higher than in the previous year (5,419 complainants in 2013-14 compared with 4,622 in the previous financial year).

Graph 5: Airservices' average contacts per complainant by quarter: 2012-13 to 2013-14



2.21 A low number of contacts per complainant is an indicator that complainants are receiving high quality first responses in a timely fashion. Even when a complainant is advised that no change is possible, when this is done well, and complainants' expectations are met in terms of the timeliness of responses, there is usually little cause for multiple contacts on the same issue.

2.22 Some have suggested that lodging many contacts about an issue lends weight by demonstrating how strongly the complainant feels about the issue. Our view is that a single contact should suffice for a complaint to be taken seriously and given proper attention. Equally, once a complaint has been fully considered, and a thorough and reasonable response provided, there is no value to either the complainant or Airservices in continuing to correspond on the issue.

- 2.23 We see the benefits of this approach as reducing the potential for complainants wasting their own time lodging many contacts on the same issues. In addition, we would prefer not to see Airservices' staff spending large amounts of time processing repeat contacts, but rather spending more of their resource effort on seeking better noise outcomes.
- 2.24 We will continue to work with Airservices to better manage those complainants that contact Airservices excessively on the same issue.

Community and industry engagement

- 2.25 ANO staff have attended community and aviation industry meetings across Australia during the past twelve months. Attending such meetings enables the ANO office to gain a first hand perspective of community and industry issues, monitor Airservices' information presentation and consultation activities, and identify emerging issues. It also provides an opportunity to increase public awareness of the ANO role, our recent activities, and the opportunities we are pursuing to improve noise outcomes.
- “By attending community and aviation industry meetings, the ANO can gain a first hand perspective of community and industry issues”*
- 2.26 This year the ANO attended or was represented at 16 Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group (or equivalent) meetings. Additionally, the ANO and staff met with individuals and representatives of community groups, members of parliament and aircraft and airport operators. Further, we attended various industry meetings, including the major annual conferences of the Australian Airports Association (AAA), the Regional Aviation Association of Australia (RAAA), the Australian Mayoral Aviation Council (AMAC), and the combined AAA-Airservices Aircraft Noise Forum. The ANO also chaired the committee that reviewed and revised Australian Standard AS2021-2000 (Acoustics: Aircraft Noise Intrusion – Building Siting and Construction).

Professional training and development

- 2.27 To keep abreast of developments in the profession of complaint investigation and management, the ANO office attended the biennial conference of the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) and presented at the annual Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP) symposium. We also maintain an active role in the Government Aviation Complaint Handling Forum and the SOCAP Government working group.

Complaint analysis and management system

2.28 During 2013-14 we transitioned to our new ANO Complaints System (ANOCs). This was a smooth transition and seamless to our complainants. The new system has contributed to a dramatic reduction in the administrative workload in managing our complaints and has helped to streamline internal workflows and task management.



3 Achievements

Noise improvement opportunities

C Can the planes climb further away?

A Mr H contacted the ANO to complain that the parachute aircraft always climbed over the beach near his home in Coffs Harbour, disturbing the peace with the constant droning. Mr H asked why the planes couldn't climb further away where it didn't affect residential areas. The ANO looked into the existing climb arrangements, reviewed the climb areas in relation to residential areas and proposed that Airservices investigate alternatives with the operator. This process took time to reach a conclusion, but the ANO continued to press for small changes if possible.

S Eventually it was identified that the planes could continue past the residential beach areas to climb further north, meaning that the noise experienced at the beach was just a passing noise not a constant drone. In addition, with a newer aircraft recently acquired by the operator the flights could fly further away from the shore over the sea and transit past more quickly, further reducing the noise impact on residences.

T Mr H was delighted with the outcome, despite the delays and even though the changes were relatively minor in nature.

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Thank you for a wonderful job done. They still are overhead in the drop but the only thing I hear is the chutes opening. I'm glad for everybody involved, and their businesses, that it can just take a few changes and everyone's happy. Thanks again, massive improvement.

3.1 Investigations into noise improvement opportunities that stem from an ANO review are tracked in our quarterly reports with brief descriptions of the change opportunity and the current status. These reports are available on our website.

3.2 **Attachment 2** summarises the noise improvement opportunities considered in the 2013-14 period. It should be noted that there is no direct correlation between the number of noise improvement opportunities explored and the number of complaints closed with a "Change adopted" outcome. This is due to a number of factors such as:

- Several complaints can relate to the same issue and each will be closed when a change is made. For example, the ANO had two complaints related to aircraft noise over Roleystone, which were addressed by Airservices' trial of a modified flight path. This one noise improvement led to two complaints closed with a "Change adopted" outcome.
- Some noise improvement opportunities, despite detailed exploration of the potential, prove not to be feasible in the short to medium term. In these cases the complaint(s) will be closed with a "No change possible" outcome.
- Some complaints are specifically about information provision, complaint handling or consultation systems and processes. A change to improve in these areas will not change the noise outcome in a particular area. However, the complaint in this case would be closed with a "Change adopted" outcome.

3.3 During the previous financial year, Airservices established a Strategic Noise Improvement Plan through which it records noise improvement opportunities, manages priorities, and tracks progress of investigations underway. The ANO is keen for as much information about the opportunities under consideration and already considered to be made available to the public in as open and transparent a manner as is practical. We have been pleased to see the further development of this in Airservices' quarterly Aircraft Noise Information Reports (available on the Airservices website, www.airservicesaustralia.com).

C Flight paths can be changed

A Ms H contacted the ANO in November 2010, frustrated that no-one seemed prepared to answer her question of why can't the planes fly further east away from residential areas?" Airservices had made changes to the flight routes around Perth Airport that came into effect in November 2008, including establishing a new instrument approach path that flew directly over Ms H's suburb of Roleystone.

S The ANO sought information from Airservices, and were advised that it was technically feasible for the flight path to be relocated. At the time Airservices did not have any systems or processes in place to consider changes proposed to improve noise outcomes.

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S The establishment of such systems took a long time and it wasn't until August 2013 that the trial of a relocated flight path was finally implemented. Both Airservices and the ANO office learnt a lot through this extended process.

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The trial of the modified flight path over Roleystone has now been operational for a week, and generally, it has seemed like heaven compared to the previous 4 years.

I would just like to say that, in my opinion, none of this would have been achieved without your tireless efforts on our behalf, and I would like to thank you most sincerely. I believe you have done a tremendous job under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

Case study review

3.4 A key achievement of 2013-14 was delivery of the *Case Studies in Complaint Management review*. In this review we considered a small sample of complaints that Airservices had handled and that had not been escalated by the complainant to the ANO. The objective of the review was to identify any lessons to be learnt, or opportunities for improvement in Airservices' management of complaints.

3.5 In the report, submitted to the Board of Airservices in September 2013 and published in January 2014, we made six recommendations aimed at improving Airservices' management of complaints across a range of issues. It seeks:

- reform in complaint record management
- better alignment of, and quality assurance in systems, processes and practices
- improved information provision and reporting based on complaint data.

The Board of Airservices accepted all recommendation and Airservices since has closed three parts of two recommendations. **Attachment 3** outlines the ANO's assessment of action on each recommendation. The report is available on the ANO website: www.ano.gov.au.

Information provision

3.6 Where changes cannot be made, it is important that communities have access to relevant information so that they can manage the noise issues they are experiencing. This might be in the form of helpful information about how to reduce noise impacts in their home, what the noise situation is like in different areas for those considering a move, how and why aircraft fly as they do, why different runways are selected and, importantly, why a change that seems reasonable cannot be made.

3.7 In the 2013-14 financial year, the ANO did not make any formal recommendations specifically about information provision, although the relationship with complaint handling is such that some of the recommendations made in the Case Studies review relate to information provision.

3.8 At the start of the financial year there were still three recommendations from the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney, February 2012* that were not yet completed. Airservices has refreshed their Aircraft Noise Information Reports and continued to enhance the information available on their website about aircraft noise issues. This has resulted in two of the remaining recommendations being closed in 2013-14.

Publications

3.9 During 2013-14 the ANO published the following, along with our quarterly reports and last year's annual report (available on our website):

- New on-line aviation resource – release
- Case studies in complaint management - Airservices Australia – report

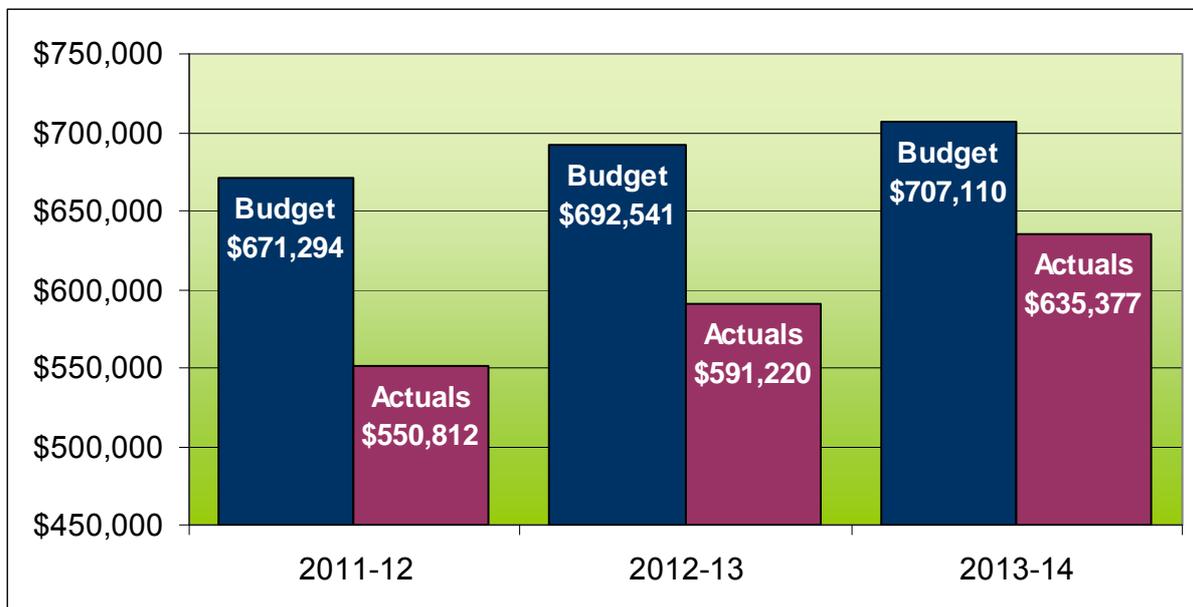
3.10 In addition to keeping our own website up-to-date, we have also contributed to the launching of two additional information resources:

- www.aviationcomplaints.gov.au to help people find the right place to make a complaint about an aviation issue, including aircraft noise
- www.aircraftnoise.com.au to provide information on the causes of aircraft noise, how the industry is working together to manage it and what people can do to reduce its impact.

4 Financial Results

- 4.1 The ANO operates autonomously in managing its financial accountabilities. In line with the ANO Charter, the ANO independently determines how funds and resources are allocated, within the budget provided by Airservices.
- 4.2 In 2013-14, the total operating expenditure of the office was \$635,377 against a budget of \$707,110. Costs include all staff salaries and entitlements, travel, and administrative overhead costs. The increase in costs from last year have been across the board, including slight increases in travel and staff costs, and the additional costs for maintenance and hosting of the new complaints system.

Graph 6: ANO budget and actual expenditure 2011-12 to 2013-14



Attachment 1 ANO complaint statistics

The following summarises the ANO complaint statistics for 2013-14.

Complaints carried forward from 2012-13	22
Complaints received 2013-14	106
Total complaints 2013-14	128

<u>Closed complaints - reviewed</u>	
No change possible - explanation provided	64
Change adopted by Airservices Australia	5
Change adopted by Airport operator	2
Change adopted by operator	4
Total complaints reviewed	75

<u>Closed complaints - not reviewed</u>	
Referred to Airservices to respond directly	34
Complainant did not provide further information	3
Outside Charter scope	2
Total complaints not reviewed	39

Complaints closed during 2013-14	114
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Complaints carried forward to 2014-15	14
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It should be noted that there is no direct correlation between the number of noise improvement opportunities explored and the number of complaints closed with a “Change adopted” outcome. This is due to a number of factors as discussed in section 3.2 of this report.

Attachment 2 Noise improvement opportunities

One of the core focuses of our investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. There is currently one potential noise opportunity under investigation that stems directly from complaints to the ANO, as shown in the table below.

Noise improvement opportunities identified during 2013-14, still under consideration

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
May 2014	Gold Coast: flights over NSW residences during daylight saving hours	The ANO has asked Airservices to look into whether a better noise outcome can be achieved for NSW residents affected by flights departing Gold Coast Airport prior to 11pm QLD time (that is, prior to the curfew commencing), when the two states are on different zones. The difference means aircraft fly over NSW homes after 11pm NSW time. Airservices has added this opportunity to their Strategic Noise Improvement Plan and has committed to considering it further.

The following table summarises the noise improvement opportunities stemming from complaints received by the ANO that were finalised during the 2013-14 financial year. Some changes have completed, while others are ongoing and will be monitored by the ANO.

Noise improvement opportunities finalised during 2013-14

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
Nov 2010	Perth – Can the flight path over Roleystone be relocated to an area that does not affect so many residences?	In Aug 2013, Airservices commenced a 12 month trial of an alternative flight path, following which Airservices will make a decision about permanent implementation.
Feb 2011	Canberra – Can parachute operations use the high noise corridor when possible to minimise overflying residential areas?	Airservices agreed to implement this change, and amended procedures accordingly. A subsequent ANO review identified that many aircraft were not complying with the new arrangements. Airservices advised that further internal documentation amendments were required to enact the change fully and that these would be completed in Aug 2013. The relevant documentation was completed in late Sep 2013. Airservices has provided data demonstrating an improvement in the level of compliance with the new arrangements in place, and advised that they will continue monitoring performance.
Apr 2012	Brisbane – Can some northbound and westbound departures from runway 19 depart on additional tracks to reduce the concentration of noise over current areas?	Airservices examined the option of a noise sharing approach, where a single departure track is replaced with multiple tracks to enhance noise sharing. Airservices identified that such an arrangement has not previously been trialled in Australia, however, Airservices intends to consider this approach in the future. Trials of this approach are not likely to be held in Brisbane initially due to the operational constraints of the airport. This type of trial is unlikely to commence elsewhere before 2015.

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
May 2012	Perth – What is the plan to address the numerous issues and change requests associated with Chidlow?	Airservices has investigated several opportunities, including one that has led to a trial of a changed departure procedure. The trial ended in March 2014 and following analysis of the results Airservices has proposed to permanently adopt the changed departure procedure. Airservices is currently pursuing the appropriate change process, including environmental assessment and consultation.
Dec 2012	Coffs Harbour – Can parachute aircraft climb over areas that do not affect residential areas as much as the current climb locations do?	The ANO requested Airservices to consider better alternative areas for parachute climb, and if none possible, to explain why they must climb where they do. Airservices delayed consideration of this until the radar service was available again. The radar was commissioned in Aug 2013. Airservices explored opportunities for the parachute aircraft to climb further from residential areas, following which the complainant has reported a discernible improvement (see Case Study 1 in this report).
Mar 2013	Jandakot – Can training flights avoid flying over Baldivis and surrounding residential areas?	The ANO requested Airservices to explore with the local community forum and operators any options to reduce the flights over Baldivis and surrounding residential areas. With assistance from the ANO, Airservices has undertaken discussions with relevant stakeholders and is helping update the fly neighbourly agreement to specify residential areas to be avoided where possible, and minimum altitudes where over-flight cannot be avoided. The updated agreement is yet to be ratified by all parties and the ANO will keep monitoring until it is.
Jun 2013	Melbourne – Can changes be made to reduce the impacts of helicopters hovering at low levels during noise sensitive times?	Following several complaints to the ANO about this issue, Airservices investigated if any changes could be made. Operators have implemented changes that should see an improvement in the noise outcome.
Oct 2013 to Mar 2014	Fly Neighbourly Agreements – Tyagarah, Traralgon, Tyabb	The ANO is monitoring Airservices' management of noise issues in these locations, stemming from a number of complaints. Airservices has agreed to continue offering their assistance to the relevant local councils to establish fly neighbourly agreements with operators and to keep residents notified of progress.

It should be noted that there is no direct correlation between the number of noise improvement opportunities explored and the number of complaints closed with a “Change adopted” outcome. This is due to a number of factors as discussed in section 3.2 of this report.

Attachment 3 ANO assessment of action on recommendations

During the 2013-14 financial year the ANO closed two of the remaining recommendations from the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney, February 2012*, and three parts of two recommendations from the *Case Studies in Complaint Management: January 2014* review, as per the following tables.

Sydney Review	
Recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Airservices should improve the clarity of maps produced in reports used to convey aircraft noise information.</p>	Closed.
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Airservices should provide more textual and qualitative assessment of aircraft noise in reporting.</p>	Closed.
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 7:</p> <p>Airservices should explore the provision of a more timely (as well as historical) method for complainants to understand why a particular Runway Mode was in use, or why a preferred Runway Mode (noise sharing) was not able to be used at that time.</p>	The ANO has met with Airservices' representatives about this and notes that action is underway.

Case Studies Review	
Recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> amend its contact acknowledgement and reference numbering system. Complainants should not be notified of a new reference number for each and every contact made. Complainants advised that responses will not be made on a particular issue, should not be responded to on that issue. Airservices should clarify what the reference number provided to complainants actually means acknowledge the lack of timeliness, apologise and provide a brief explanation for the delay where service delivery standards are not met be mindful of balancing the resource burden with the value to the complainant when considering the provision of ongoing information, particularly if similar information has already been provided. Procedures or guidelines should be established to assist staff with making these decisions. 	Airservices action plan finalised.

Case Studies Review	
Recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. as far as practicable, assign complaints to an airport, rather than a generic category b. provide reports to airports that provide sufficient detail to help identify meaningful issues and avenues for potential improvements c. be clear to complainants about what is, and is not, provided to airports about their complaint d. ensure that information provided to complainants is accurate and does not potentially misrepresent the situation, or contradict other information published by Airservices on their website e. consider opportunities to take the lead in consulting various stakeholders as part of the process to identify noise improvement outcomes, rather than refer complainants to those stakeholders with the expectation that the complainant will manage that consultation process. 	<p>Parts 2a and 2d completed.</p> <p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address the remaining parts of this recommendation.</p>
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. develop and implement processes to ensure all appropriate information about complainants is passed to other authorities when undertaking a transfer of a complaint b. clarify when a response will be provided. Information linked to the complaint form should explain that a response will be provided where specifically requested, where a question has been asked or where a response can provide useful and relevant information. The exception to this rule should be when a complainant has explicitly requested no response or when a complainant has been advised previously that the particular issue has been dealt with to finality. 	<p>Airservices action plan finalised.</p>
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 4:</p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. store all correspondence relating to a complaint in a single repository, accessible to all complaint handlers and, to the extent practicable, accessible through the relevant NCMS database record b. ensure complaint records are managed in compliance with the National Archives Act 1983 as well as relevant Australian Standards and Australian Government recommended practices. c. standardise the salutations, introductory text and sign-off styles used for correspondence with complaints d. carefully consider the expectations created by encouraging further contact and only do so when appropriate e. use other means to contact clients whenever details have been provided and the primary means of contact fails. 	<p>Part 4a completed.</p> <p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address the remaining parts of this recommendation.</p>
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 5:</p> <p>Airservices should routinely analyse complaints to identify common issues not yet addressed by the current suite of fact sheets and develop fact sheets or standard responses for residents raising the same issues.</p>	<p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address this recommendation.</p>

Case Studies Review	
Recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 6:</p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. establish clear protocols for when residents are to be referred directly to an external authority b. review its Guide and Protocols documents and current practices to ensure that documented procedures for managing unreasonable complainant behaviour are followed in practice, including consistent and timely application of management plans for persistent complainants, and ensuring that it is cases of unreasonable behaviour that are subject to 'formal restriction' not complainants c. check compliance with its Guide and Protocols in an internal audit/review process for complaint management. 	<p>Airservices action plan finalised.</p>