



Quarterly Report
April – June 2015

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
1 Introduction	1
2 Overview	1
3 Complaint handling	2
4 Consultation	4
5 Information Provision	6
6 Conclusions	6
Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics	8

1 Introduction

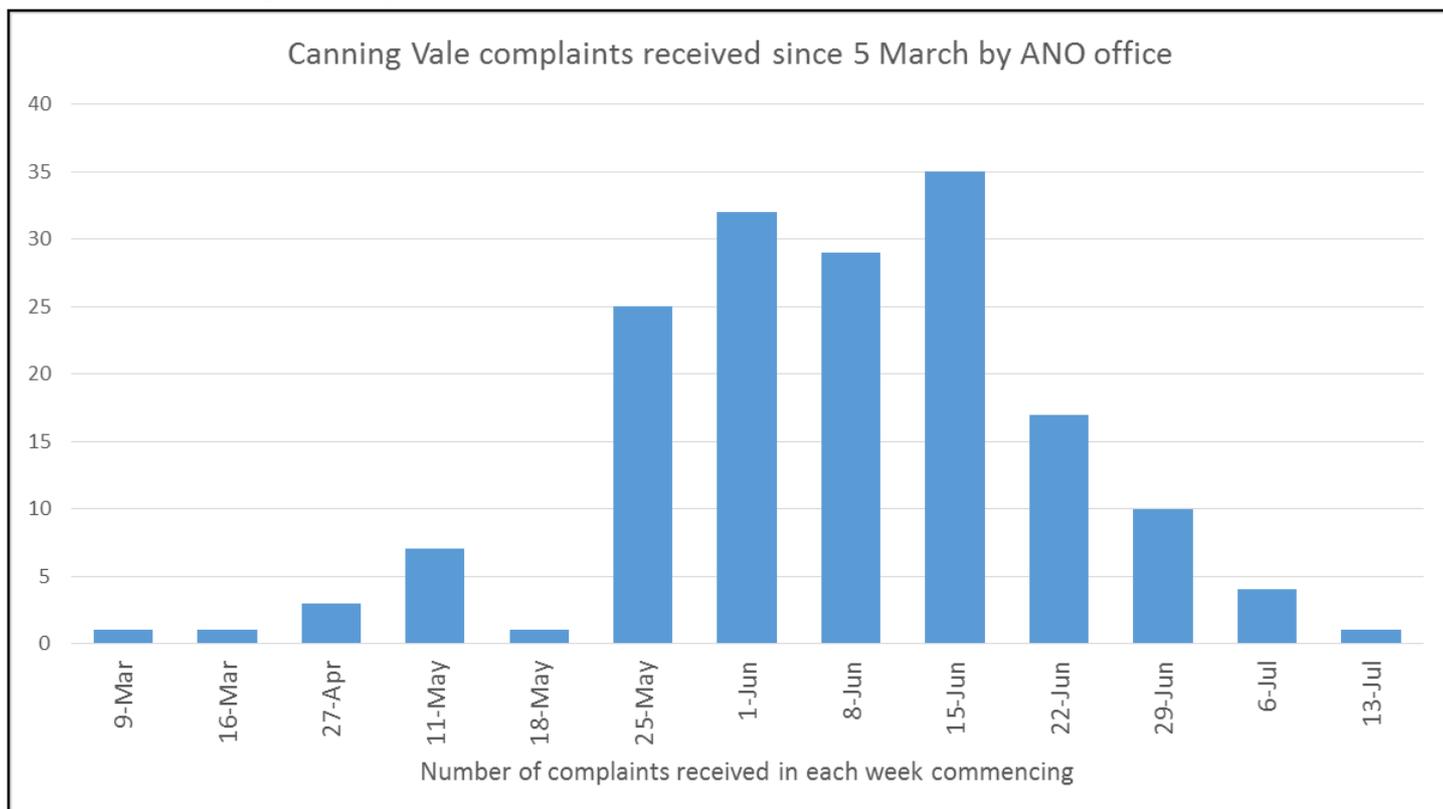
- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a summary of ANO activities during the April to June 2015 quarter. It is structured around the three key functions of the ANO, these being review and monitoring of Airservices Australia's and the Department of Defence's:
- a. complaint handling
 - b. consultation and
 - c. provision of information about aircraft noise.

2 Overview

- 2.1 This quarter has seen the highest number of complaints received by the ANO office in our almost five years of operation. This resulted from a high level of engagement by communities in Perth to Airservices' consultation on three noise improvement initiatives. In particular, these have come from residents of the suburb of Canning Vale, which overall, on the information available, could be worse off following the suite of changes. Most have lodged complaints with the ANO as well as providing their feedback directly to Airservices to ensure their objections are considered.
- 2.2 We applaud Airservices for the effort to find a better noise outcome for Perth. At the same time it is important to be rigorous with the process for considering and consulting on such changes. This can be a challenging task in the face of public pressure for a quick response and more information.
- 2.3 The ANO has been unable to form a view as yet on the changes pending more information from Airservices about the impacts and benefits of the changes. Since the changes were announced on 5 March 2015, Airservices has maintained that a decision to proceed with the southern departures trial would be subject to the finalisation of environmental assessment and consultation processes. A number of deadlines have passed and the ANO has expressed to Airservices our growing concerns about the ongoing lack of clear information to substantiate the case that each of the three changes represents an overall noise improvement. At the same time we recognise the complexities involved in making a thorough and fair assessment of such complex changes.
- 2.4 Our review of Defence's compliance with the noise related Conditions of Approval for Australian Super Hornet flying operations at RAAF Base Amberley, QLD, has also progressed this quarter. Following our submission of the draft report to Defence on 1 June, the ANO is refining the document and is expecting final inputs from Defence to enable completion of the report during the third quarter of 2015.

3 Complaint handling

3.1 In the quarter the ANO received 177 new individual complaints, which is strikingly above the long term average of just under 25 complaints per quarter. Of these 177 complaints, the majority (152) were from residents of Canning Vale, WA, and five were about Defence aircraft noise management. The following graph shows the complaints received just from Canning Vale, by week since the proposed changes were announced publicly on 5 March. (Our average weekly complaint load before this was 2 per week.)



3.2 At the end of the quarter 16 complaints were open (including three about Defence). 172 complaints were closed in the period with 15 reviewed in detail by the ANO, however none led to identification of a noise improvement opportunity. The remaining 157 were all closed as direct referrals to Airservices (155) or Defence (2).

3.3 More detailed complaint statistics to the end of June 2015 are included at **Attachment 1**.

Seeking noise improvement opportunities

3.4 A core focus of our investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. During this quarter, there were no noise improvement opportunities identified through ANO investigations.

3.5 Table 1 (below) outlines those matters that the ANO is monitoring in response to complaints. These are matters that are long-term or ongoing work being managed by Airservices. The ANO complaints have been closed on the basis that Airservices is managing the matter but we are monitoring Airservices' handling of the issues until they are completed.

Table 1: Noise improvement opportunities – ANO monitoring Airservices' management

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
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?	<p>Airservices examined the option of a noise sharing approach, where a single departure track is replaced with multiple tracks to enhance noise sharing.</p> <p>Airservices identified that such an arrangement has not been trialled previously in Australia; however Airservices intends to consider this approach in the future.</p> <p>Trials of this approach are not likely to be held in Brisbane initially due to the operational constraints of the airport. Airservices has advised that it is currently looking at noise respite departures, using an additional departure track for night departures, as part of the current noise improvement review in Perth.</p>
May 2014	Gold Coast: flights over NSW residences during daylight saving hours	<p>The ANO 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. Airservices has added this opportunity to their Strategic Noise Improvement Plan. Airservices identified that the change “adds some complexity but is feasible”. Although initially committing to investigating the matter in the first half of 2015, Airservices has now advised that a timeframe for further consideration will be determined after a decision is made about implementing the Gold Coast ILS. The ANO is seeking further information on the inter-relationship of these projects and why this noise improvement opportunity cannot be pursued sooner.</p>
Aug 2014	Camden: removing practice engine failures from residential areas	<p>The ANO asked Airservices to look into whether procedures for ‘practice engine failures’, similar to those employed at Jandakot Airport, could be applied at Camden to avoid doing this practice over residential areas. Airservices consulted with relevant stakeholders and the airport has now updated their ‘fly friendly’ arrangements accordingly. The formal adoption of the new arrangements is pending endorsement at the July 2015 Community Aviation Consultation Group meeting.</p>

Seeking improvements in aircraft noise complaint handling

3.6 At the conclusion of a complaint investigation, the ANO will generally write to the complainant with a detailed explanation of the issues investigated and the outcome of the ANO review. The ANO also provides feedback to the complaint handling agency (Airservices or Defence), including a copy of the correspondence sent by the ANO to the complainant (where appropriate, taking account of privacy obligations). This enables the agency complaint handling staff to see how the ANO considered the issues and to take on board any lessons learnt.

4 Consultation

4.1 The ANO office attended a number of airport consultative meetings and other industry forums during the quarter, in line with our role of monitoring Airservices' and Defence's consultation and information provision. These included:

Airservices: Australian Mayoral Aviation Council annual conference, three of Airservices' consultation sessions in Perth, five of Airservices' consultation sessions in the Gold Coast, Melbourne Community Aviation Consultation Group, Airservices/Australian Airports Association Annual Noise Forum

Defence: Point Cook Consultative Forum

4.2 Given the significant consultation activities Airservices was undertaking, in early May the ANO published a short article on our expectations for what should be included in the consultation that accompanies air traffic management changes. It is available on our website at: <http://www.ano.gov.au/news/>.

4.3 Since the start of the calendar year, the ANO has received several complaints about Airservices' consultation for the noise improvement initiatives it is considering in Perth and at the Gold Coast. We are monitoring Airservices' consultation about these initiatives and reviewing their management of community feedback, with a view to providing constructive input as appropriate. In summary:

- Gold Coast trial flight path change for runway 14 departures: The trial commenced in January 2015 and continues, despite no resolution as yet to address the unexpected concentration of flight tracks over Farrant's Hill. We understand that Airservices has continued its regular engagement with Farrant's Hill residents while the planned noise monitoring associated with the trial was completed during the quarter. We are advised that Airservices is analysing the monitoring results and determining the best approach to address the unintended impacts at Farrant's Hill. Unfortunately this is taking longer to resolve than would be ideal, however the ANO is comfortable that Airservices is progressing the necessary work and keeping residents appropriately informed.
- Perth Noise Initiatives 2015: At the Perth Airport Community Forum on 5 March, Airservices announced a suite of noise improvement initiatives that it proposed to implement during 2015, subject to community consultation and environmental assessment processes being completed.

On 11-13 May, Airservices conducted three consultation sessions in the Perth suburbs of Guildford, Gosnells and Maddington. The ANO attended these sessions, which were structured as drop-in information sessions. Feedback was provided during the sessions as appropriate and subsequently as an input to future consultation sessions. In particular, the ANO passed on feedback that:

- the timing of sessions was difficult for some and all three sessions were on weeknights at the same time
- the letter-box leaflet was received too late for some residents to be able to make arrangements to attend, may not have been received by those with no junk mail stickers. It was titled "Perth Noise Improvements", a title that may not be accurate for some areas and in any case a title that is likely to dissuade interest rather than provoke it
- it would be useful to have a Chinese-speaking translator at the sessions in the south
- a session in the suburb of Canning Vale itself would be beneficial given the negative impacts this area is likely to experience if the changes go ahead
- the format of the sessions didn't work well – there was no presentation and with over 100 attendees there weren't enough staff to go around.

On 28 May 2015, Airservices introduced the first of the three changes: a change to its Noise Abatement Procedures that altered the preferred runway arrangements at Perth. This change was in line with the timeline announced in early March, although the ANO has expressed to Airservices our concern that the change was implemented in the face of significant concern by some communities and with many concerned that the information provided did not present a compelling case for change. This office shared some of those concerns. The ANO has since been provided with a copy of the environmental assessment document and continues to have concerns about the noise impacts and benefits that result from this change. We are closely monitoring the impacts and have sought further information from Airservices. At this time, we are yet to be convinced that the change represents a noise improvement.

The other two of the three proposed changes have been delayed from the original timelines foreshadowed in Airservices' presentation to the Perth Airport Community Forum of 5 March. The ANO awaits finalisation of the environmental assessments to be able to properly consider the benefits and impacts of the changes proposed. Based on the information currently available, we are yet to be convinced that the proposed changes represent a clear noise improvement.

Airservices has published information about further consultation sessions scheduled for August 2015. The ANO intends to attend these sessions to continue our active monitoring role.

- Gold Coast ILS introduction: we also note that Airservices has undertaken significant consultation activities to assist in informing the Gold Coast communities about the proposal to introduce an Instrument Landing System at the Gold Coast Airport. The ANO has provided input on Airservices' consultation strategy when requested, and in June the ANO office attended a series of consultation sessions that Airservices was conducting. During these sessions, the ANO office provided general feedback, including on ways to describe effectively noise and its potential impacts, presenting unfamiliar aviation concepts, and how to respond to questions raised about what Airservices will do to manage the noise if the ILS does go ahead. The ANO office was satisfied that Airservices was providing factual information and helping community members to understand the potential impacts of the flight path that would be required if a decision to implement the ILS is taken, and how to submit their feedback about the proposal.

5 Information Provision

- 5.1 During the quarter, Airservices provided information to support the closure of the final recommendation sub-part from our *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report, published in January 2014. The recommendation related to ensuring Airservices' complaint records are managed in compliance with the *National Archives Act 1983* as well as relevant Australian Standards and Australian Government recommended practices. Airservices now has no recommendations outstanding from any ANO reviews.
- 5.2 The ANO continues to monitor Airservices' information provision, particularly as it supports the proposed changes in Perth and the trial in the Gold Coast. We have some concerns as outlined above that the available information for the proposed changes in Perth does not make a strong case for these changes. We encourage Airservices to make available their environmental assessments and/or a summary of these as soon as possible to assist the community to understand and evaluate the proposals.
- 5.3 Defence has made a number of changes to update its website in response to enquiries made by the ANO, either in the course of our Review of the Super Hornets at RAAF Base Amberley, or through complaints. These enhancements to their information provision are small and ad hoc, however the ANO commends Defence on their responsiveness to feedback.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 This quarter has been particularly focussed, in the civil space, on Airservices' proposals for change in the name of improving noise outcomes. While we have been strongly advocating that Airservices pursue opportunities to improve noise outcomes where practical, we do accept that there are many situations where no improvements can be identified. In such cases, clearly and honestly presenting the information about why a change cannot be pursued is appropriate.

- 6.2 We have flagged in this report that, at this time, we are yet to be convinced that the Perth changes proposed will provide an overall better noise outcome. This is not to say that the changes should or should not proceed, but that further information is required to make the case for change. We think it is reasonable that in the quest to improve, sometimes what looks like a viable opportunity at first glance may, with further detailed analysis and consultation, turn out to not be a noise improvement after all. When this is the case, to not implement a proposed change further supports Airservices' commitment to seriously consider and pursue noise improvement opportunities.
- 6.3 For Defence, we have had only a small number of complaints and a continued focus on finalising the Super Hornet Review report.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
24 July 2015

Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics both for the quarter and also since the establishment of the ANO.

AIRSERVICES	Apr 2015	May 2015	Jun 2015	Total for quarter	Total from 1 Sep 10 to 30 Jun 15
Complaints received:	5	41	126	172	643
Complaints closed:	9	29	132	170	630
Total complaints closed - not reviewed:					285
Complainant did not provide further information					19
Outside charter scope					20
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					246
Total complaints closed - reviewed:					345
No change possible - explanation provided					298
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					11
Change adopted by Airport operator					25
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					11

DEFENCE	Apr 2015	May 2015	Jun 2015	Total for quarter	Total from 19 Jan 15 to 30 Jun 15
Complaints received:	1	2	2	5	5
Complaints closed:	0	1	1	2	2
Total complaints closed - not reviewed:					2
Complainant did not provide further information					0
Outside charter scope					0
Referred to Defence to respond directly					2
Total complaints closed - reviewed:					0
No change possible - explanation provided					0
Change adopted by Defence					0