



Quarterly Report
July – September 2014

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
1 Introduction	1
2 Overview	1
3 Complaint handling	1
4 Consultation	3
5 Information Provision	4
6 Conclusions	4
Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics	5
Attachment 2 ANO assessment of action on Review Recommendations	6

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a summary of ANO activities during the July to September 2014 quarter. It is structured around the three key functions of the ANO, these being review and monitoring of Airservices Australia's:
- complaint handling
 - consultation and
 - provision of information about aircraft noise.

2 Overview

- 2.1 We have been pleased to see progress by Airservices continuing to address the recommendations from our Case Studies Review. A further six sub-parts of the outstanding recommendations were completed during the quarter and work is underway on the remaining parts of the recommendations.
- 2.2 Airservices has advised us that they are continuing to work on the last outstanding recommendation from the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* report.

3 Complaint handling

- 3.1 In the quarter the ANO received 22 new individual complaints, which is slightly below our quarterly average from the previous financial year of 26.4. This is consistent with previous years which often show quarter three to be below the annual average.
- 3.2 At the end of the quarter 13 complaints were open. More detailed complaint statistics to the end of September 2014 are included at **Attachment 1**.

Seeking noise improvement opportunities

- 3.3 A core focus of our investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. During this quarter, a potential noise opportunity was identified stemming directly from a complaint to the ANO, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Noise improvement opportunities identified during the quarter

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
August 2014	Opportunity to reduce aircraft noise at Camden airport by modifying practice engine failure procedures.	The ANO has asked Airservices to look into whether best practice procedures employed at other general aviation airports could be applied at Camden. Specifically, this relates to 'practice engine failures' and whether they can be avoided over residential areas. Airservices has agreed to consider this matter further and is consulting with relevant stakeholders.

3.4 There were two previous noise improvement opportunities stemming from complaints received by the ANO that were progressed during the Jul-Sept 2014 quarter.

- a. The first relates to procedures at the Gold Coast during the NSW daylight savings period. This change has been scheduled for consideration in 2015 and will now enter our monitoring status as detailed in Table 2.
- b. The second opportunity was finalised and relates to Jandakot training flights. The Fly Neighbourly Agreement has now been amended and published incorporating changes to flight procedures over Baldivis and surrounding suburbs.

3.5 Table 2 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 2: Noise improvement opportunities – ANO monitoring Airservices' management

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
Nov 2010	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. We are now awaiting the finalisation of this matter.
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.
May 2012	Perth – What is the plan to address the numerous issues and 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 adopt the changed departure procedure permanently. Airservices is currently pursuing the appropriate change process, including environmental assessment and consultation.
Oct 2013 – 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.
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. Airservices has added this opportunity to their Strategic Noise Improvement Plan and has committed to consider the matter in 2015.

Seeking improvements in aircraft noise complaint handling

- 3.6 Many different agencies and organisations have a role to play in managing aircraft noise complaints including Airservices, airports, local councils, the Air Force, airlines, aviation industry businesses (such and parachute operations providers) and others. To support Airservices and the ANO office in providing the best possible service, last year in Sydney we ran a training seminar on handling complaints in general and aircraft noise complaints in particular. This was exceptionally well received by attendees from many of the organisations referred to above. Consequently we are now running a further seminar in Perth in conjunction with our attendance at the Perth and Jandakot airports' community consultative forums. We have been very pleased by the number of people and agencies registering to participate.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 The ANO office was represented at a number of airport consultative meetings and other industry forums during the quarter, in line with our role of monitoring Airservices' consultation and information provision. As reported previously, attendance at such meetings helps us to better understand the information requirements of communities and other stakeholders, which allows us to provide more effective feedback to Airservices on these issues.
- 4.2 This quarter, we attended an Industry Noise Working group meeting hosted by Airservices Australia. Actions from this meeting will see an improvement to the noise information available to both residents affected by noise and other relevant stakeholders.
- 4.3 This office has also worked hard to progress the review of Australian Standard 2021 (AS 2021), which deals with aircraft noise. The standard has been updated and the revised version is now open for public consultation. A meeting of the relevant committee of Standards Australia (which I chair), scheduled for early November, will hopefully finalise the update.

5 Information Provision

- 5.1 We have identified a number of recommendations for further improvement of public information, along with improved complaint handling, in our *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report, published in January 2014. During the period six sub-parts of the outstanding recommendations were completed
- 5.2 Attachment 2 lists the one ongoing recommendation from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* report and all recommendations from our *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report.
- 5.3 Following significant effort by the ANO office Standards Australia has agreed to develop an information handbook on best practice in describing aircraft noise. We proposed this project following the limits placed on the review of AS 2021. The narrow scope of the review as a technical update left a gap in how to ensure high quality, consistent and effective information is available to the public to describe aircraft noise in a particular area. The November meeting of the Standards Australia committee referred to in paragraph 4.3 above will initiate that project.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 We have kept this to a relatively brief, essentially statistical update this quarter, to avoid duplication with content presented in our Annual Report.
- 6.2 It has nonetheless been a productive quarter. I have been particularly satisfied with Airservices' progress with their new ANIR formats and with the work they have undertaken so far on the recommendations from our *Case Studies* review. I anticipate many more recommendations will be closed off in the next quarter.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
2 October 2014

Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

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

	Jul 2014	Aug 2014	Sept 2014	Total for quarter	Total from 1 Sep 10 to 30 Jun 14
Complaints received:	5	5	12	22	426
Complaints closed:	11	8	4	23	413
Total complaints closed - not reviewed:					114
Complainant did not provide further information					18
Outside charter scope					19
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					77
Total complaints closed - reviewed:					299
No change possible - explanation provided					254
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					11
Change adopted by Airport operator					24
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					10

Attachment 2 ANO assessment of action on Review Recommendations

Recommendations are classified as 'ongoing' where there remains work to be undertaken by Airservices Australia.

Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney (March 2012)

Since the last quarterly report to the Board, Airservices has advised of continued work to address the last recommendations for the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney* report.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<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>	<p>The ANO has met with Airservices' representatives about this and notes that action is underway.</p>

Case Studies in Complaint Management (January 2014)

Airservices has continued to undertake reforms in response to all recommendations made in the *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report. A number of recommendation sub-parts have been closed during the July-September 2014 quarter:

- Recommendation 2 parts b and c
- Recommendation 4 parts c and e
- Recommendation 5
- Recommendation 6 part c

The table below summarises the status of all recommendations.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Case Studies Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <p>a. 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</p> <p>b. acknowledge the lack of timeliness, apologise and provide a brief explanation for the delay where service delivery standards are not met</p> <p>c. 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.</p>	<p>Airservices action plan finalised.</p>

Ongoing 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, 2b, 2c and 2d completed.</p> <p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address the remaining part 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, 4c and 4e 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>Completed.</p>

Ongoing 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>Part 6c completed.</p> <p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address the remaining parts of this recommendation.</p>