



Quarterly Report

October - December 2015

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1 Introduction

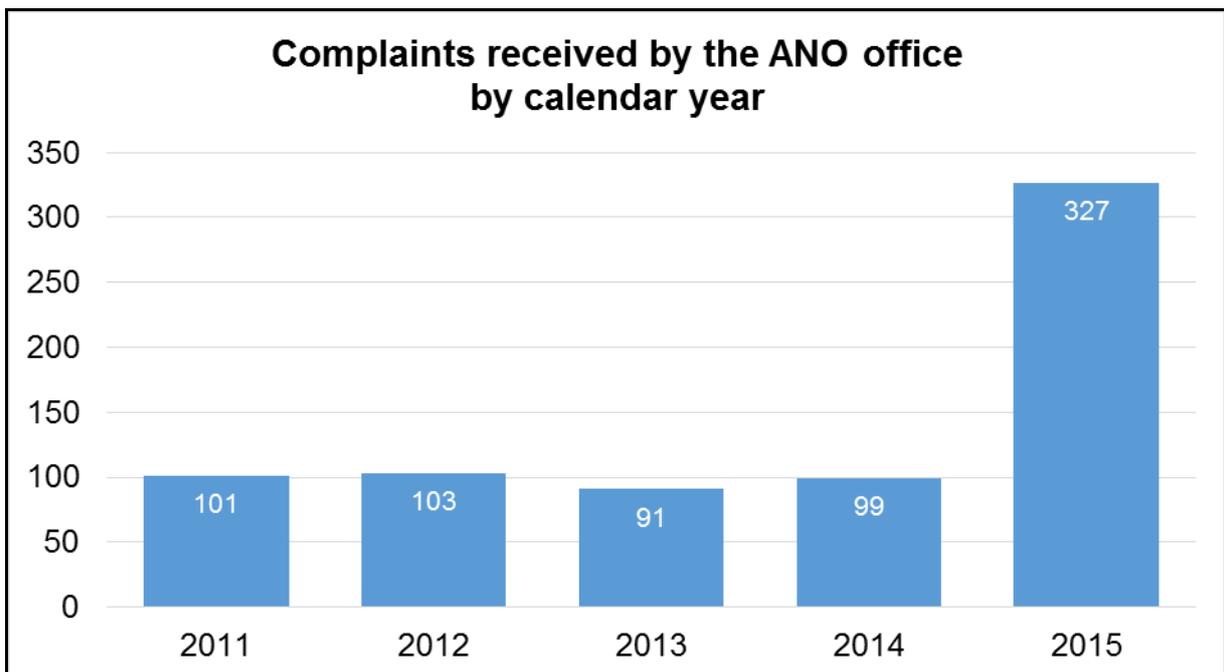
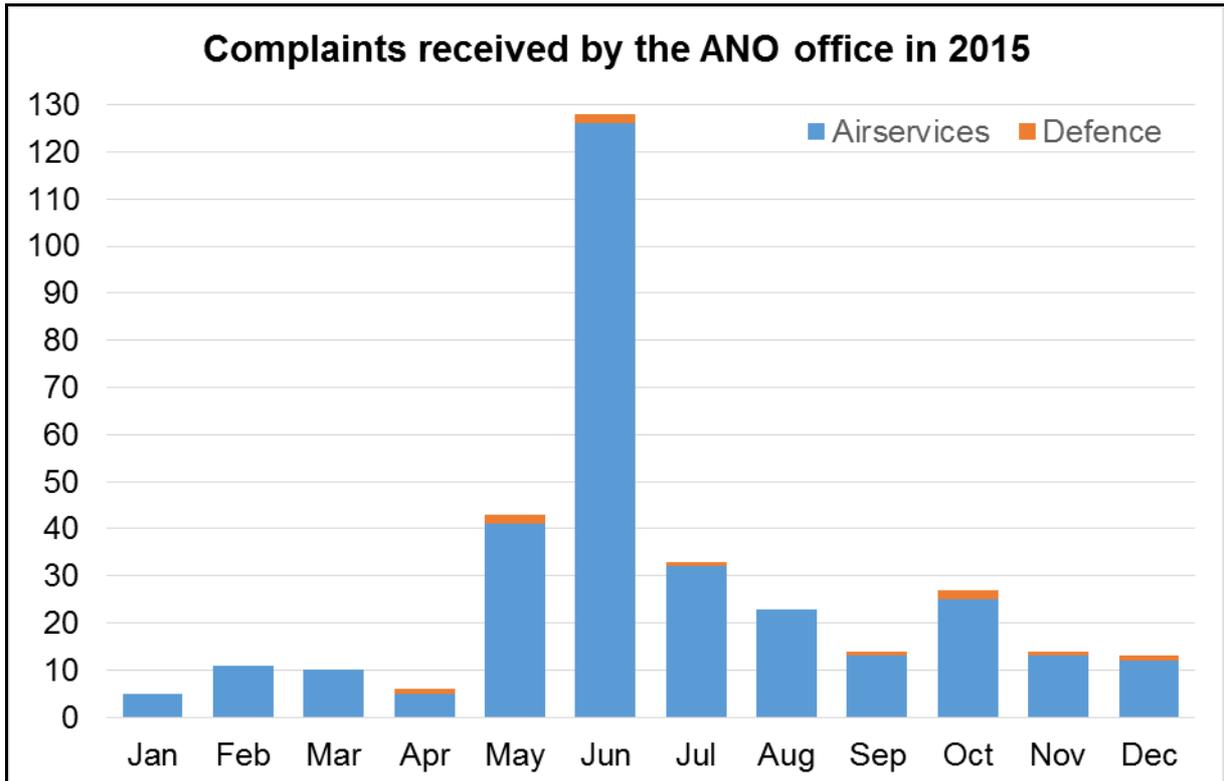
- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a summary of ANO activities during the October to December 2015 quarter. It is structured around the three key functions of the ANO, these being review and monitoring of Airservices Australia's and the Department of Defence's:
- a. complaint handling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

2 Overview

- 2.1 The ANO was pleased to finalise the *Investigation into Complaints about the Perth Noise Improvement Proposals* and submit the final report to the Board of Airservices in November 2015. The Board has accepted all 25 recommendations and Airservices has developed a management response to address these over the coming year. While the report is critical of Airservices, nothing contained in it should be taken to be in any way critical of Airservices' commendable effort in trying to improve the noise outcome for Perth residents. The recommendations are intended to improve Airservices' development, analysis and management of future noise improvement proposals, which the ANO hopes to see Airservices continuing to pursue. The report and Airservices' response will be published this month on the ANO website: <http://www.ano.gov.au/reportsstats/>.
- 2.2 Defence has been actioning the 12 recommendations and the two suggestions for improvement made in the *Review of Australian Super Hornet Flying Operations at RAAF Base Amberley (August 2015)*. One recommendation has been completed. The ANO is currently reviewing the action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence's advice that several others are also complete. **Attachment 2** provides a summary of progress against all recommendations.
- 2.3 The number of complaints received by the ANO office has steadily reduced across the quarter, largely reflecting the wrapping up of the Perth Noise Initiatives by Airservices. The ANO received significantly more complaints in 2015 than in any other year. Having taken on the role of providing ANO services for Defence, a small increase was anticipated. However, the significant community response to Airservices' Perth initiatives in May to July was a much greater contributor.
- 2.4 As part of the commitment to identifying and building on 'world's best practice' in managing aircraft noise issues, the ANO accepted two invitations to speak at international conferences, held consecutively in Geneva: the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) Global Sustainable Aviation Summit, and the Airports Council International (ACI) World Environment Standing Committee meeting. There was considerable interest in developments in Australia which in turn assisted the ANO in building strong links to airports and air traffic management agencies from across the globe.

3 Complaint handling

3.1 In the quarter the ANO received 54 new individual complaints, four of which were about Defence aircraft noise management. The continued reduction from the preceding two quarters reflects Airservices' wrapping up of consultation activities for the Perth Noise Improvement Initiatives, although there was a small spike in October stemming from community concern about Airservices' flight path trial at the Gold Coast. The following graphs show the monthly complaints received in 2015 and the yearly comparison since the ANO commenced.



3.2 At the end of the quarter 17 complaints were open. 67 complaints were closed in the period with 27 reviewed in detail by the ANO. Although none of the complaints led directly to changes, the issues raised in the large number of complaints from Perth contributed to the findings and recommendations of the ANO's Investigation into Complaints about the Perth Noise Improvement Proposals.

3.3 More detailed complaint statistics are included at **Attachment 1**.

Seeking noise improvement opportunities

3.4 A core focus of ANO 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, although the ANO's Investigation into Complaints about the Perth Noise Improvement Proposals led to 25 recommendations aimed at improving Airservices' development, analysis and management of future noise improvement proposals.

3.5 Table 1 (below) outlines those matters that the ANO is monitoring in response to complaints or initiatives that are long-term or involve ongoing work by Airservices. The ANO complaints have been closed on the basis that Airservices is managing the matter, however the ANO is 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?	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 been trialled previously 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. Airservices had previously advised that it would use the proposed night time respite path in Perth to test the validity of a multi-track model. As the trial is now not proceeding, Airservices has advised that further consideration of a multi-track model is unlikely to be trialled anywhere in Australia for some time.
May 2014	Gold Coast: flights over NSW residences during daylight saving hours	The ANO asked Airservices to consider if 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 added this opportunity to its Strategic Noise Improvement Plan and 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 since advised that a timeframe for further consideration will be determined after a decision is made about implementing the Gold Coast ILS. While acknowledging that Airservices must manage its resources effectively, the ANO has expressed its view that this seems to be a relatively small feasible change that could deliver a noticeable (if minor) noise improvement. The ILS decision will not affect the viability of this change and it is unfortunate that further delays have meant that another NSW daylight savings period has been missed.

Seeking improvements in aircraft noise complaint handling

- 3.6 The ANO notes that during this quarter Airservices' Noise Complaints and Information Service effectively closed its service for just over two weeks during late October and early November. This was to allow for the transition to a new complaints management system, which is expected to enhance Airservices' complaint management capabilities. Despite the backlog of complaints that resulted for Airservices, the ANO only received two complaints about the closure. The ANO considers this a positive reflection on the sound communications and management strategy that Airservices employed when undertaking this important change.

4 Consultation

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

Australian Airports Association Annual Conference, Newcastle Airport Board meeting, ARUP 'Sound-lab' demonstration, Sydney Airport Community Forum, Standards Australia working committee meeting.

- 4.2 Since the start of 2015, the ANO has received many complaints about Airservices' consultation for the noise improvement initiatives at the Gold Coast and in Perth. The ANO has been monitoring Airservices' consultation about these initiatives and reviewing its 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 has now run for the 12 month trial period. The ANO notes that Airservices has released a Post Implementation Review of the trial that concludes the trial did not achieve the outcomes and benefits intended. Therefore Airservices will not implement the flight path change. Pre-trial flight path arrangements will be reinstated by June 2016, following appropriate design and regulatory approval processes. The ANO is pleased that Airservices has demonstrated its commitment to seriously pursuing noise improvement opportunities identified by the community in conducting this trial. It was unfortunate that the desired noise improvements could not be achieved and that there were some unexpected negative impacts. The ANO will continue to monitor Airservices' pursuit of noise improvement initiatives to ensure that the best noise outcomes can be achieved for communities.
- Perth Noise Initiatives 2015: As foreshadowed in the previous quarterly report, the ANO has undertaken a formal review of Airservices' Perth Noise Improvement Initiatives 2015. The report was submitted to the Airservices Board in late November 2015 and the Board has accepted all 25 recommendations. The report and Airservices' response will be published this month on the ANO website: <http://www.ano.gov.au/reportsstats/>.

5 Information Provision

- 5.1 The ANO continues to review and monitor Airservices' information provision, particularly in relation to the noise improvements it has been considering in 2015. The ANO has been impressed by the quality of information that the Noise Complaints and Information Service has been able to provide in periods of high demand through the effective use of standard letter templates, fact sheets and information packs. While this has not always allowed for specific questions to be addressed directly, it has helped to get a large amount of good information to complainants in a timely fashion. That said, many of the recommendations in the ANO's *Investigation into Complaints about the Perth Noise Improvement Proposals* are about improving public information to support change proposals.
- 5.2 Defence has welcomed the Review of the Super Hornets at RAAF Base Amberley, and has developed an implementation plan to address the findings. **Attachment 2** summarises progress against the 12 recommendations of the report.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 2015 was a busy and interesting year for the ANO office. Taking on the Defence role has been a highlight and Defence has demonstrated a commitment to improving its complaints management, information and consultation practices to improve its management of aircraft noise issues.
- 6.2 For Airservices, it has been a tough year in the aircraft noise management space, actively pursuing a large program of potential noise improvement initiatives. There has been much to learn, and hindsight is a wonderful thing as the saying goes, however the ANO again commends Airservices for its commitment and courage in seeking noise improvements.
- 6.3 Both Airservices and Defence have ANO recommendations to address in 2016. The ANO office looks forward to working with the two agencies as they continue to improve and pursue better noise outcomes for their communities.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
19 January 2016

Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

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

AIRSERVICES	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Total for quarter	Total from 1 Sep 10 to 31 Dec 15
Complaints received:	25	13	12	50	762
Complaints closed:	40	13	8	61	745
Total complaints closed - not reviewed:					355
Complainant did not provide further information					19
Outside charter scope					20
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					316
Total complaints closed - reviewed:					390
No change possible - explanation provided					341
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					13
Change adopted by Airport operator					25
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					11

DEFENCE	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Total for quarter	Total from 19 Jan 15 to 31 Dec 15
Complaints received:	2	1	1	4	11
Complaints closed:	3	1	2	6	11
Total complaints closed - not reviewed:					5
Complainant did not provide further information					0
Outside charter scope					0
Referred to Defence to respond directly					5
Total complaints closed - reviewed:					6
No change possible - explanation provided					6
Change adopted by Defence					0

Attachment 2 Outstanding ANO recommendations

The following table sets out the outstanding recommendations made by the ANO and the ANO's assessment of action against each.

Super Hornet Review (August 2015)

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
Recommendation 1 – Defence should adopt appropriate record management practices to ensure identified gaps in record-keeping are addressed.	<u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that it has taken action to address this recommendation. ANO is reviewing action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence advice.
Recommendation 2 – Defence should work with the NFPMS supplier to improve the accuracy and reliability of the data captured by the NFPMS and presented in reports.	<u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that it is working with the NFPMS supplier and reviewing other management strategies to deal with this.
Recommendation 3 – Defence should ensure that requirements in Standing Instructions and similar documents are aligned with the Super Hornet Conditions of Approval and associated plans and strategies.	<u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that this is complete. ANO is reviewing action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence advice.
Recommendation 4 – Defence should as soon as possible <ol style="list-style-type: none"> conduct a review of the state of implementation against the recommendations of the Vipac report completed in 2011. report the findings of this review to the Commonwealth Environment Department in accordance with the Conditions of Approval. 	<u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that this is complete. ANO is reviewing action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence advice.
Recommendation 5 – Defence should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> update the Noise Management Plan and delete the requirement for a copy to be provided to the Ipswich Library, or provide a copy to the library update the Noise Management Plan to correct the telephone number for obtaining a copy of the Plan. 	<u>Complete</u> - The ANO has reviewed the updated version of the Noise Management Plan and confirmed this recommendation is completed.
Recommendation 6 – Defence should review the reporting requirements in the Noise Management Plan and establish systems to ensure adherence to the requirements.	<u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that this is complete. ANO is reviewing action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence advice.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<p>Recommendation 7 – Defence should routinely review and update (as required) the Noise Management Plan in line with the documented requirements. Defence should document the review process and outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that this is complete. ANO is reviewing action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence advice.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8 – Defence should ensure that future quarterly reports include information to support the requirements of the current version of Noise Monitoring and Complaints Handling Strategy.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that work on this recommendation is ongoing with completion expected in Q3 2016.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9 – Defence should publish reports and meeting minutes in a reasonable timeframe.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that this is complete. ANO is reviewing action taken and seeking evidence to support Defence advice.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 – Defence should expedite establishment of an online complaint lodgement capability.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that work on this recommendation is ongoing with completion expected by end 2016.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 – Defence should routinely review and update (as required) the Australian Super Hornet Noise Monitoring and Complaints Handling Strategy in line with the documented requirements. Defence should document the review process and outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that work on this recommendation is ongoing with completion expected in Q2 2016.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 – Defence should routinely review and update (as required) the Australian Super Hornet Noise Mitigation and Complaint Resolution Strategy in line with the documented requirements. Defence should document the review process and outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> - Defence has advised that work on this recommendation is ongoing with completion expected in Q2 2016.</p>