



Quarterly Report

December 2011 – March 2012

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a commentary on the December 2011 to March 2012 period of operations of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO). This report, unlike previous reports, covers four months of operations to bring the reports into line with standard quarterly reporting periods.
- 1.2 The report is structured around the three key functions of the ANO, these being review and monitoring of Airservices Australia's complaint-handling, consultation, and the provision of information about aircraft noise.

2 Complaint handling

- 2.1 In the December 2011 to March 2012 quarter, the ANO received 29 new individual complaints. This brings the total number of complaints received by the end of March 2012 to 174. Of these, 162 are closed. A further breakdown of the complaint statistics is included at **Attachment 1**.
- 2.2 It is noteworthy that after Sydney and Perth, the highest number of complaints relate to activity at Brisbane, Parafield and Gold Coast Airports. The ANO is giving particular focus to the issues in these locations, including conducting detailed research and analysis with the aim of identifying potential opportunities for improvement.

Implementation of Review of Complaints Handling - Airservices Australia February 2011

- 2.3 The ANO office has considered material provided by Airservices Australia and has assessed that action is underway on all of the 18 recommendations. Of these, eight have been actioned with no ongoing work anticipated. Six of the remaining have been actioned, and the ANO is monitoring implementation of the new processes or initiatives to ensure effective implementation prior to removing the items from the 'ongoing' list. This leaves four recommendations that are still being progressed by Airservices. **Attachment 2** summarises the ANO assessment of the ongoing recommendations in this report (and the Perth and Sydney reports discussed under 'Information Provision' below). The ANO is pleased to see the commitment and effort that Airservices is putting into implementation of the recommendations.
- 2.4 In February 2012, the ANO published on its website an assessment of Airservices' response to the Review of Complaints Handling.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 During the period December 2011 to March 2012, the Ombudsman (or his representative) attended three Community and Consultation Group meetings or other Airport Noise Committee meetings.

- 3.2 The ANO is using these meetings as an opportunity to communicate the role and activities of the ANO as well as to meet the mandate as stipulated in the ANO Charter: *“to monitor and report on the effectiveness of community consultation processes relating to aircraft noise undertaken by Airservices”*. Where appropriate, the ANO office will provide feedback to Airservices, including suggestions for improvement, to assist Airservices in their consultation practices and processes. Where a specific issue is identified, a formal report containing recommendations may be presented to the Board and reported publicly, although to date no such reporting has been warranted.
- 3.3 Feedback to Airservices so far has covered issues such as:
- The manner in which information is presented
 - The opportunity that consultation meetings present for active distribution of fact sheets and other materials.

4 Information Provision

- 4.1 During the period since the last quarterly report, the ANO has published two formal reports on information presentation:
- Review of Aircraft Noise Information Presentation and Complaint Resolution: Perth (published December 2011)
 - Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney) - Airservices Australia (published March 2012)
- 4.2 The recommendations from each report have been accepted by the Board of Airservices and the ANO notes that action is underway on a number of the recommendations arising from the Perth Review. Airservices has had the reports for four months and one month respectively. The ANO will provide a considered analysis of the implementation of the recommendations in its next quarterly report. The summary at **Attachment 2** includes the ANO assessment of all ongoing recommendations raised in the three public reports to date.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The period has involved consultation and finalisation of both the Perth review and Sydney review, alongside the day-to-day management of individual complaints. Feedback on both of these reports has been generally positive and the office looks forward to seeing Airservices' adoption of the recommendations.

5.2 The ANO notes that Airservices has a substantial number of ongoing recommendations which represents a significant workload. As mentioned previously, Attachment 2 provides a detailed summary of the ANO's assessment of all ongoing recommendations; the following table summarises progress:

Recommendation status:	Complaint Handling	Perth	Sydney	Total: 34
actioned	8	0	0	8
actioned with ongoing monitoring by ANO	6	0	0	6
action is underway	4	4	0	8
ANO is awaiting formal advice on action	0	3	9	12

5.3 The next phase of the ANO's work will see increased emphasis on direct feedback, particularly in the area of consultation processes, while continuing to contribute to the evolution of Airservices complaint handling and information provision. Key issues and actions will continue to be reported through these quarterly reports.

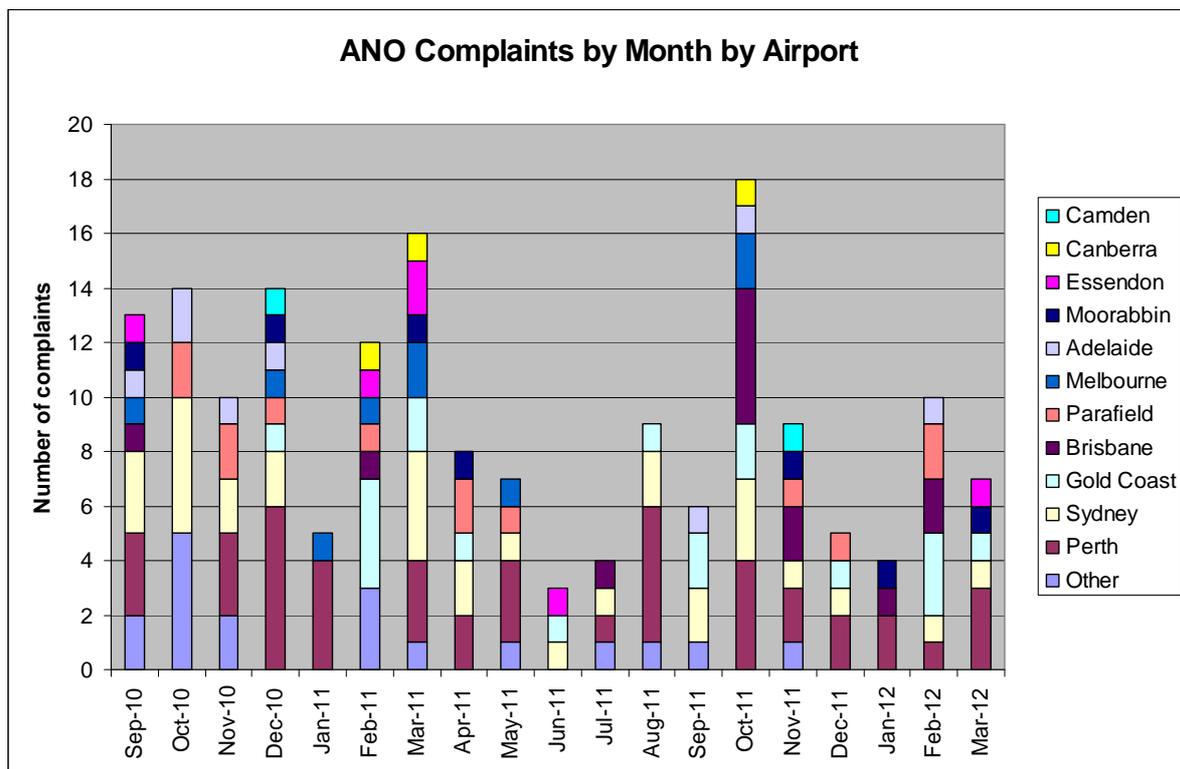


Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
3 April 2012

Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics for the period.

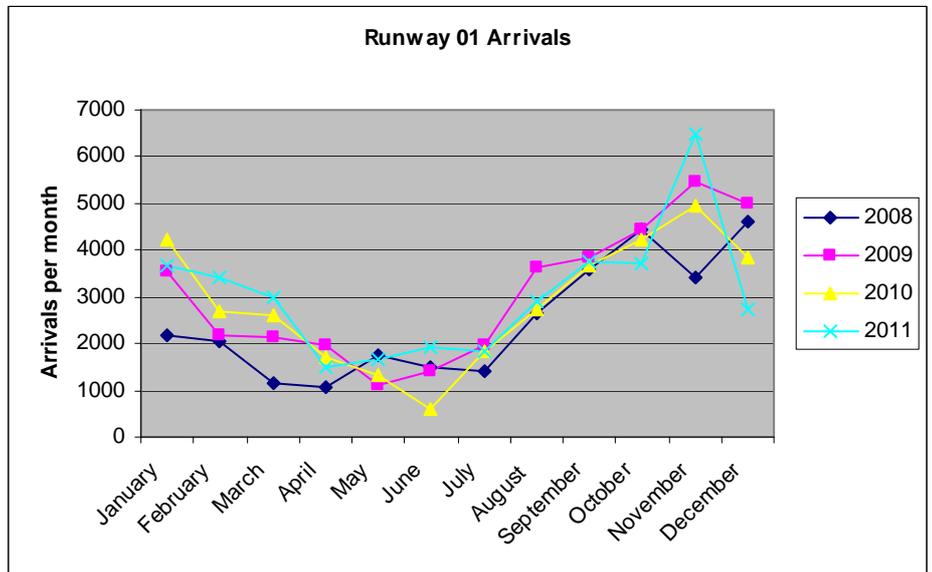
	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Total for period	Total from 1-Sep-10 to 31-Mar-12
Complaints received:	5	4	10	7	26	174
Complaints closed:	5	4	10	8	27	159
Complaints not reviewed:						41
Complainant did not provide further information						10
Outside charter scope						10
Referred to Airservices to respond directly						21
Complaints reviewed:						118
No change possible - explanation provided						110
Change adopted by Airservices Australia						2
Change adopted by Airport operator						4
Change adopted by Operator						2
Average time taken to close complaints: (including weekends and public holidays)						58 days



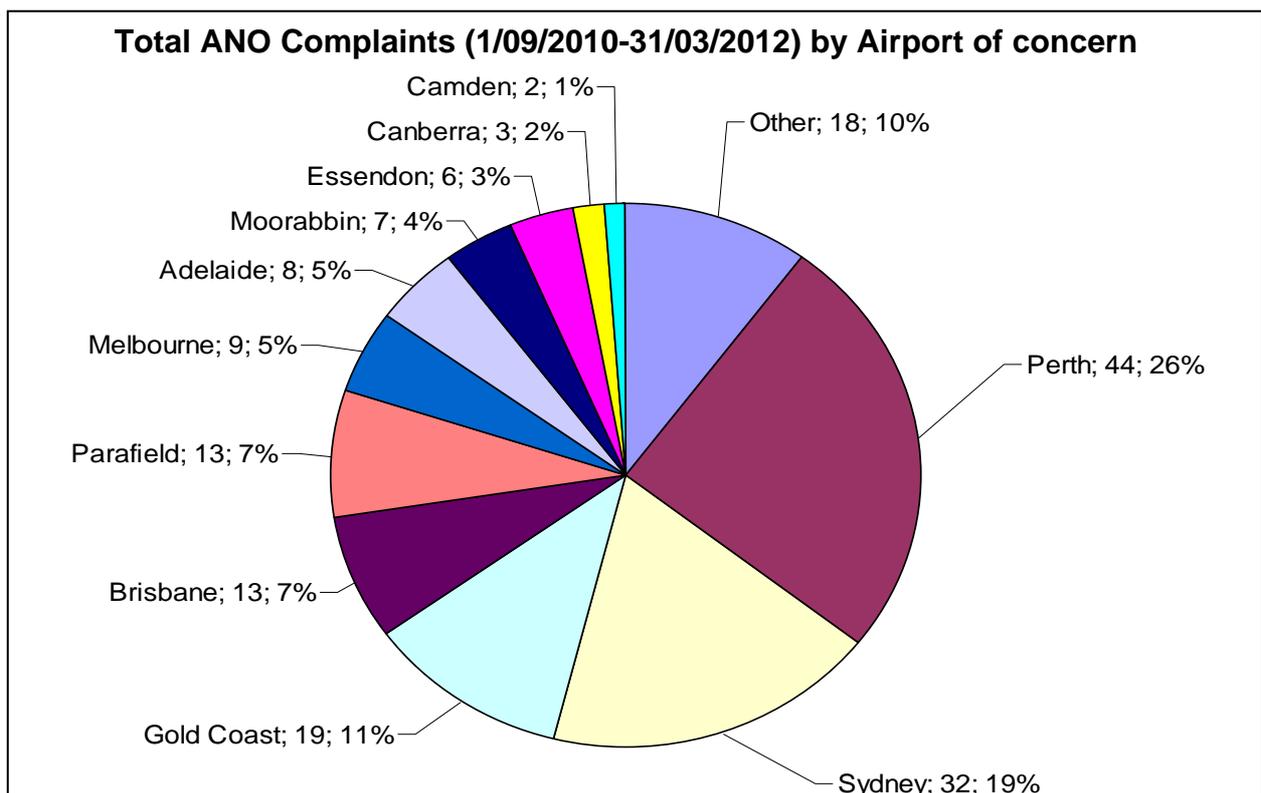
Complaints continue to be received at a roughly steady level. Despite the release of the Perth and Sydney reviews in the period, complaints relating to these two airports continue. This is unlikely to change before the recommendations take effect.

Complaints about Gold Coast, Parafield and Brisbane airports have also continued at steady pace and now represent the next three most complained about airports from

the ANO perspective. For the Gold Coast, this is consistent with an increased level of media coverage and public awareness of aircraft noise issues in response to the recent release of the draft Master Plan for Gold Coast. For Brisbane, analysis shows that almost all complaints relate to instrument approaches onto runway 01, and concern over increased traffic levels. The seasonal effects shown in the graph of Runway 01 arrivals indicate why it seems that traffic levels increase over summer months. Over recent years this seasonal variation has been fairly consistent, meaning it is likely that summer will continue to be the worst period for those affected by this approach.



Complaints relating to Parafield Airport have increased again in the period, after dropping off last quarter. This is perhaps indicative of the increasing flying training possible during the better weather of summer months, the later circuit times during daylight saving and also re-release for public consultation of the draft Parafield Master Plan. The ANO office has noted that a particular aircraft type operated by one of the Parafield flying schools has been a factor in some of the recent complaints and this issue being investigated further.



Attachment 2 ANO assessment of action on Review Recommendations

Recommendations are classified as 'ongoing' where there remains work to be undertaken by Airservices Australia. While a number of recommendations have been actioned by Airservices, the ANO considers it appropriate to monitor application of new processes or initiatives to ensure effective implementation before removing the items from the 'ongoing' list.

Recommendation	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
Complaints Handling Review	
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Airservices should amend its systems and procedures to support the NEU seeking a suitable remedy for those complaints where it may be possible to improve the noise outcome, and ensure follow-up on such opportunities. It is acknowledged that an improved noise outcome may only be feasible for a small minority of the total noise complaints received.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Airservices should make a senior manager accountable for capturing, recording and tracking through to implementation, noise improvement opportunities arising from complaints.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO is seeking details of the system being used for the capture, recording, and tracking of noise improvement opportunities.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 7:</p> <p>Airservices should update and enhance their suite of fact sheets to cover all major airports in Australia and the key aircraft noise issues of interest to the general public. Airservices should publish these on their website, as well as disseminate them to specific complainants as appropriate. In addition, the remainder of the Airservices noise information website should be reviewed and updated where appropriate.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will monitor and support the development of fact sheets for major airports and will provide input to improve the content of fact sheets that have already been published.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 11:</p> <p>Airservices should establish a training package, and relevant supporting material, to assist managers and key decision makers in recognising the value of complaints and the manner in which they can contribute to system and service improvements.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 13:</p> <p>Airservices should place greater focus on identifying, recording and reporting issues in addition to reporting the numbers of complaints and complainants. The key indicators that should inform an understanding of complaints should be the issues raised, and the number of persons who have complained about those issues, rather than the number of times individuals have contacted the NEU about a particular issue.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will monitor the new initiatives as they are rolled out across all public reports.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 14:</p> <p>Airservices should develop clear messages on key issues that provide a realistic picture of what is, and what is not, likely to be achievable. Matters of government policy should be cleared in advance with the Minister.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 15:</p> <p>Airservices should implement processes to ensure that issues identified through complaints are followed up, through the process of consideration, decision and where appropriate, implementation.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>

Recommendation	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 16: Airservices should give priority to the replacement of the NEU complaints database with a system capable of providing more sophisticated analysis of complaint data.</p>	The ANO notes that action is underway.
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 17: Airservices should develop a formal, written and published instruction on recording relevant statistical details about issues, complaints, complainants and contacts.</p>	The ANO notes that action is underway.
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 18: Airservices should develop a standard clause relating to the minimisation of noise, for inclusion in operational Letters of Agreement with aircraft operators, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
Perth Review	
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 1: In its ongoing development of public reports on aircraft noise, Airservices should review the reports with the aim of making the reports as easy as possible to understand. This should include using 'plain English' in place of technical terminology, considering the usefulness of averages in cases of a wide spread of data, incorporating some analysis of the data, and establishing a simple system for obtaining public feedback on reports.</p>	The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 2: Airservices, in addition to implementing the recommendations from the ANO's Complaint Handling Review, should continue to improve information provided to the public and industry, through an increased focus on complaint issues and identifying opportunities for possible improvements in noise outcomes. Public and industry reporting on complaints should provide analysis in addition to the data.</p>	The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 3: Airservices should undertake regular reviews of the information provided on its website and in printed material to ensure that the material is current, relevant to the audience, and responds to feedback from stakeholders.</p>	The ANO notes that action is underway.
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 4: Airservices should further develop its capacity to provide comprehensive information on all aspects of aircraft noise through NCIS as well as via fact sheets, and its website. This could include such matters as explaining flight paths and why planes fly where they do, explaining changes in air traffic over time (even where there has been no specific action to bring about that change), and explaining the processes for determining the location of aircraft noise monitors and the role of those monitors. It should also include a process for reporting publically on initiatives to improve noise outcomes, including cases where those initiatives result in a conclusion that improvements cannot be achieved.</p>	The ANO notes that action is underway.
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 5: Where complaints/enquiries relate to matters for Government, Airservices should advise complainants of this and, where possible, refer to available material which presents the Government's position. Where complainants wish to pursue their complaints with the Department, Airservices should assist in transferring the complainant directly to the Department.</p>	The ANO notes that action is underway.

Recommendation	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 6: Airservices should develop an information package that presents an accurate aircraft noise information picture for Perth, and make this available on its website and in other formats as appropriate.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Perth Review Recommendation 7: Airservices should ensure that it has a clearly defined assessment process for considering possible changes to improve noise outcomes, which should include appropriate public reporting. Such reporting could encompass the WARRP Post Implementation Review.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
Sydney Reveiw	
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 1: Airservices should develop a consolidated list of information sources, including the purpose and/or objective of each document, as well as a brief summary of content.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 2: Airservices should improve the clarity of maps produced in reports used to convey aircraft noise information.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 3: Airservices should provide more textual and qualitative assessment of aircraft noise in reporting.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 4: Airservices should provide more information, clearly presented, on daily or seasonal variations, where significant.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 5: Airservices should provide at least one Sydney specific fact sheet explaining Airservices' roles in noise sharing, LTOP, runway selections and noise respite and when appropriate, refer enquirers to other existing noise information sources.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 6: Airservices should produce a short report on LTOP performance, and the efforts currently being made to ensure the best possible noise sharing results are delivered.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 7: 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 is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 8: Airservices should provide links to applicable sources of information on sound insulation for homes, especially information addressing cost effective means of reducing the intrusion of aircraft noise.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 9: Airservices should publish a link directing complainants to the Departmental website containing reports on curfew dispensations.</p>	<p>The ANO is awaiting advice about action on this recommendation.</p>

