



Quarterly Report

July - September 2012

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and commentary on the operations of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) during the July to September 2012 quarter.
- 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 provision of information about aircraft noise.

2 Complaint handling

- 2.1 In the quarter, the ANO received 25 new individual complaints. This brings the total number of complaints received by the end of September 2012 to 234. Of these, 214 are closed. The final breakdown of the complaint statistics, updated with figures to the end of September 2012 is included at **Attachment 1**. It also includes some discussion of complaint resolutions from the quarter.

Update on *Review of Complaints Handling - Airservices Australia (February 2011)*

- 2.2 Airservices continues to action the ongoing recommendations from this first review. One recommendation has now been removed from the ongoing list, as monitoring action is no longer deemed necessary, following the rollout of training by Airservices. However, there have been no other changes to the status of the remaining recommendations during the quarter: one recommendation is yet to be actioned, while eight others are subject to ANO monitoring of new process implementation.
- 2.3 **Attachment 2** summarises the ANO assessment of the ongoing recommendations in this review (and the Perth and Sydney reviews discussed under 'Information Provision' below).

3 Consultation

- 3.1 During the quarter, the Ombudsman (or his representative) attended three airport consultative meetings. The ANO uses these meetings as an opportunity to communicate the role and activities of the ANO as well as to meet (in part) 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”*.

4 Information Provision

- 4.1 The ANO has published two formal reports on information presentation, focussed on issues arising from Perth and Sydney, but with most of the recommendations having relevance at many locations across the country. The summary at **Attachment 2** includes the ANO assessment of all ongoing recommendations raised in the three public reports to date.
- 4.2 There have been no changes to the status of the ongoing recommendations from these two reviews during the quarter.

Update on Review of Aircraft Noise Information Presentation and Complaint Resolution: Perth (December 2011)

- 4.3 Airservices has been progressing all of the recommendations made in this review. Four of the seven recommendations have been actioned with action underway on the remaining three. The ANO is monitoring implementation of new processes for three of the four actioned recommendations.

Update on Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney) - Airservices Australia (March 2012)

- 4.4 Three of the nine recommendations made in this review have been actioned and work is underway on addressing the remaining six.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Airservices has continued to action the review recommendations during the quarter, although this is not clearly reflected in the table below as only one recommendation has changed status. The ANO hopes to see a more significant change next quarter when the actions currently underway reach their conclusion.

Recommendation status:	Complaint Handling	Perth	Sydney	Total: 34
actioned	9	1	3	13
actioned with ongoing monitoring by ANO	8	3	0	11
action is underway	1	3	6	10
ANO is awaiting formal advice on action	0	0	0	0

5.2 No formal reviews have been initiated during the quarter, and nor have any formal recommendations been made in the quarter arising from individual complaints.

5.3 During the quarter, the ANO has investigated the option of full runway length departures (in the context of Perth airport). The office has also been reviewing opportunities for small noise improvements at Parafield Airport. Reports on both of these initiatives will be prepared in the coming months.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
2 October 2012

Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics for the quarter.

	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	Sep 2012	Total for period	Total from 1-Sep-10 to 30-Sep-12
Complaints received:	13	5	7	25	234
Complaints closed:	14	11	9	34	214
Complaints not reviewed:					52
Complainant did not provide further information					14
Outside charter scope					13
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					25
Complaints reviewed:					162
No change possible - explanation provided					136
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					3
Change adopted by Airport operator					18
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					5
Average time taken to close complaints: (including weekends and public holidays)					59 days

Adopting change following complaints

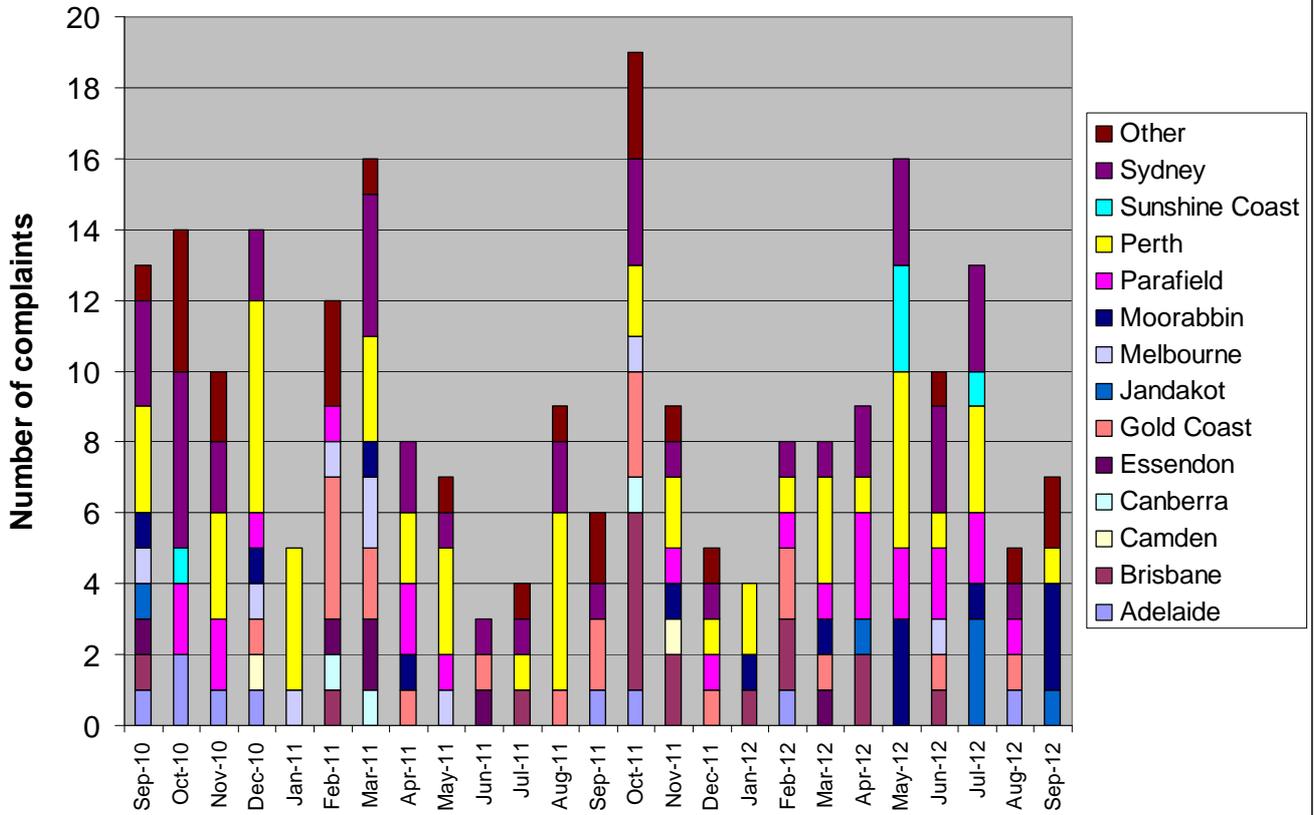
The ANO actively seeks opportunities for noise improvements arising from complaints. In the previous quarterly report, we discussed how often no change is possible, and the statistics clearly bear this out. Although small, there have still been some complaints that have led to changes being adopted.

It is notable that the complaints that have led to changes by the Airport and aircraft operators are in large part from secondary airports. The table below shows the break down of complaints that led to a change by Airport and aircraft operators:

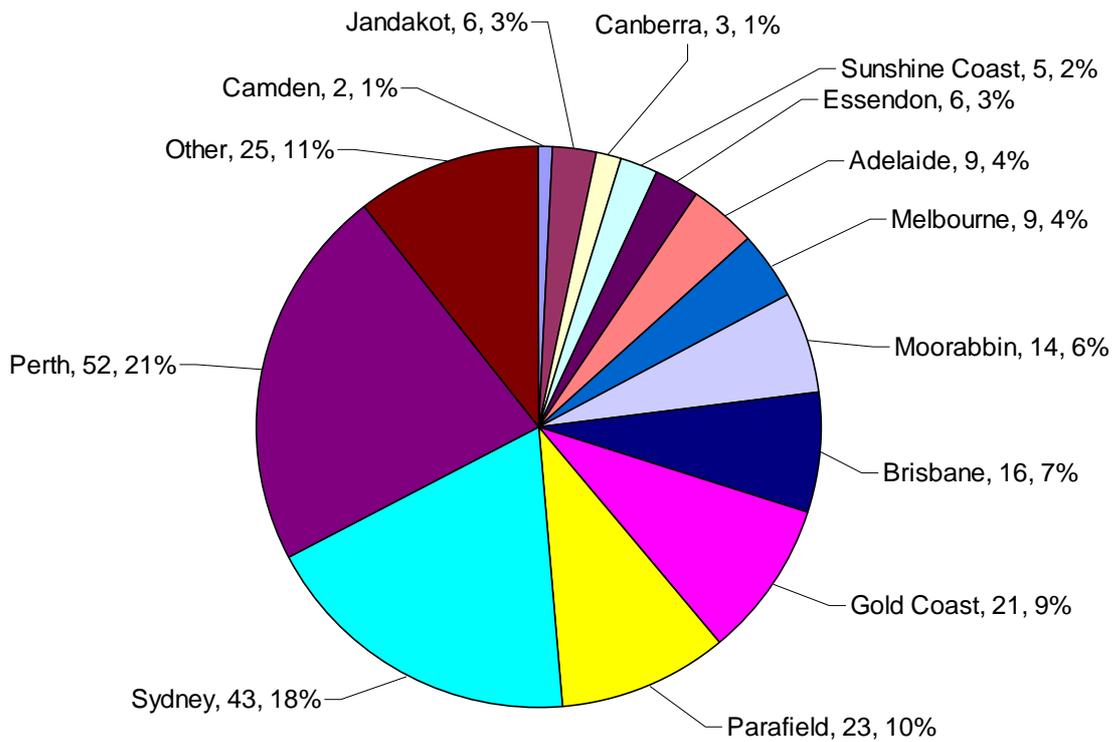
Airport	Complaints
Parafield	10
Sunshine Coast	4
Gold Coast	2
Moorabbin	1
Camden	1
Tocumwal	1
Melbourne	1
Mangalore	1
Canberra	1
Adelaide	1

The willingness by the Airport and aircraft operators to pursue opportunities to foster good relationships with their local communities, even where the changes may only deliver small gains is commendable. Some of the changes adopted have included changes to fly neighbourly programs, relocation of a training area, flight path changes, and a change in operating area for helicopters.

ANO Complaints by Month and Airport



ANO Complaints (1/09/2010 - 30/09/2012) by Airport of concern



Attachment 2 ANO assessment of action on Review Recommendations

Recommendations are classified as 'ongoing' where there remains work to be undertaken by Airservices Australia and/or where monitoring the application of the new procedures by the ANO is required. 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.

Since the last report to the Board, Airservices has commenced the roll out of training that addresses Complaints Handling Recommendation 11, so the ANO is no longer monitoring implementation and this recommendation has been excluded from the following table.

Ongoing recommendations	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 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 will monitor the application of the new processes.</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 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>Actioned by Airservices</p> <p>The ANO will monitor the continued development of fact sheets and clarity of information provided to the public.</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 monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Recommendation 16:</p> <p>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>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<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>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<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>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<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>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<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>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<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>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</p>
<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>	<p>Actioned by Airservices The ANO will now monitor the application of the new processes.</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 notes that action is underway.</p>

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
Sydney Review	
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Airservices should improve the clarity of maps produced in reports used to convey aircraft noise information.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Airservices should provide more textual and qualitative assessment of aircraft noise in reporting.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 4:</p> <p>Airservices should provide more information, clearly presented, on daily or seasonal variations, where significant.</p>	<p>The ANO notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 5:</p> <p>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 notes that action is underway.</p>
<p>Sydney Issues Recommendation 6:</p> <p>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 notes that action is underway.</p>
<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 notes that action is underway.</p>