



## Quarterly Report

October – December 2013

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## 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a summary of ANO activities during the October to December 2013 quarter. It is structured around the three key functions of the ANO, these being review and monitoring of Airservices Australia's:
- a. complaint handling
  - b. consultation and
  - c. provision of information about aircraft noise.

## 2 Overview

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- 2.1 The key achievement in the past quarter has been finalisation of our *Case Studies in Complaint Management* review. We expect that the report will be published next month. It makes six recommendations aimed at improving Airservices' management of complaints across a range of issues, all of which Airservices has accepted. It seeks:
- reform in complaint record management
  - better alignment of, and quality assurance in systems, processes and practices
  - improved information provision and reporting based on complaint data

## 3 Complaint handling

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- 3.1 In the quarter, the ANO received 23 new individual complaints, which is in line with the long term average. This brings the number of complaints received to an overall total of 346 since we commenced operations in September 2010. At the end of the quarter, 19 complaints were open. More detailed complaint statistics to the end of December 2013 are included at **Attachment 1**.
- 3.2 A total of 91 complaints were received in the 2013 calendar year, which compares with 103 in 2012 and 101 in 2011.

### Seeking noise improvement opportunities

- 3.3 One of the core focuses of our investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. The following tables summarise the noise improvement opportunities stemming from complaints received by the ANO that were either under investigation (Table 1) or finalised (Table 2) during the quarter. The tables over the page have been updated to show the progress made in the past three months.

**Table 1: Potential noise improvement opportunities under investigation**

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
May 2012	Perth – What is the plan to address the numerous issues and requests associated with Chidlow?	The ANO has sought detail from Airservices on the specific proposals to be considered and the timeline. Airservices advised that they had aimed to assess the feasibility of 70% of the Perth initiatives currently listed on their Strategic Noise Improvement Plan by the end of 2013, with the remainder assessed by June 2014.
Dec 2012	Coffs Harbour – Can parachute aircraft climb over areas that do not affect residential areas as much as the current climb locations do?	The ANO has requested Airservices to consider better alternative areas for parachute climb, and if none possible, to explain why they must climb where they do. Airservices delayed consideration of this until the radar service was available again. The radar was commissioned in early Aug 2013. The ANO is aware that Airservices has investigated the potential for an improved noise outcome and awaits their final report.
Mar 2013	Jandakot – Can training flights avoid flying over Baldivis and surrounding residential areas?	The ANO requested Airservices to explore with the local community forum and operators any options to reduce the flights over Baldivis and surrounding residential areas. Airservices has undertaken some discussions with relevant stakeholders and the ANO awaits their report.

**Table 2: Noise improvement opportunities finalised during the quarter**

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
Feb 2011	Canberra – Can parachute operations use the high noise corridor when possible to minimise overflying residential areas?	Airservices agreed to implement this change, and amended procedures accordingly. A subsequent ANO review identified that many aircraft were not complying with the new arrangements. Airservices advised that further internal documentation amendments were required to enact the change fully and that these would be completed in Aug 2013. The relevant documentation was completed in late Sep 2013. Airservices has provided data demonstrating an improvement in the level of compliance with the new arrangements in place, and advised that they will continue monitoring performance.

## 4 Consultation

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- 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. 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 Airservices has, for some time, had extensive dealings with a small community concerned about aircraft noise in an otherwise tranquil location. The ANO is working to ensure the remaining issues raised by the community are dealt with thoroughly and to finality.

## 5 Information Provision

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- 5.1 In the first week of January the ANO reviewed Airservices' activities aimed at addressing the outstanding recommendations from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* review. The ANO has now closed one of the three remaining recommendations, which relates to improved presentation of reports. This is based on improvements to the public reports made over time, and on the introduction of new issues categories into Airservices' complaints database in November 2013 and which will be reflected in reports published from Q1/2014 onwards.
- 5.2 The ANO notes that there is significant opportunity to do more with the reports, which in turn will help in better informing the public about the efforts to address noise issues and the limitations that exist in this space. The ANO will continue to work with Airservices including making specific suggestions for further improvement, but would not expect to elevate these to the level of formal recommendations as long as there remains a willingness to work on further evolution of the reports.
- 5.3 **Attachment 2** lists the two ongoing recommendations from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* review. All other recommendations have now been actioned.
- 5.4 We have also identified a number of recommendations for further improvement of public information in the upcoming report for our *Case Studies in Complaint Management Review*.
- 5.5 Further, the ANO is contributing to the development of a Standards Australia guidance document about aircraft noise information provision and also chairs the committee reviewing the Australian Standard 2021–2000: Acoustics — Aircraft noise intrusion — Building siting and construction.

## 6 Conclusions

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- 6.1 Completion of our major *Case Studies in Complaint Management* review this quarter was the culmination of another productive year for the ANO office. We have been pleased to see Airservices transform their complaint handling team, processes, and culture in a definable way over the past 12 months. In addition, the introduction of changes that have improved the noise situation in a number of locations across the country has been encouraging.
- 6.2 We look forward to seeing continued improvement through 2014 built on implementation of the recommendations from our recent review coupled with introduction a major re-design of Airservices' complaints database.



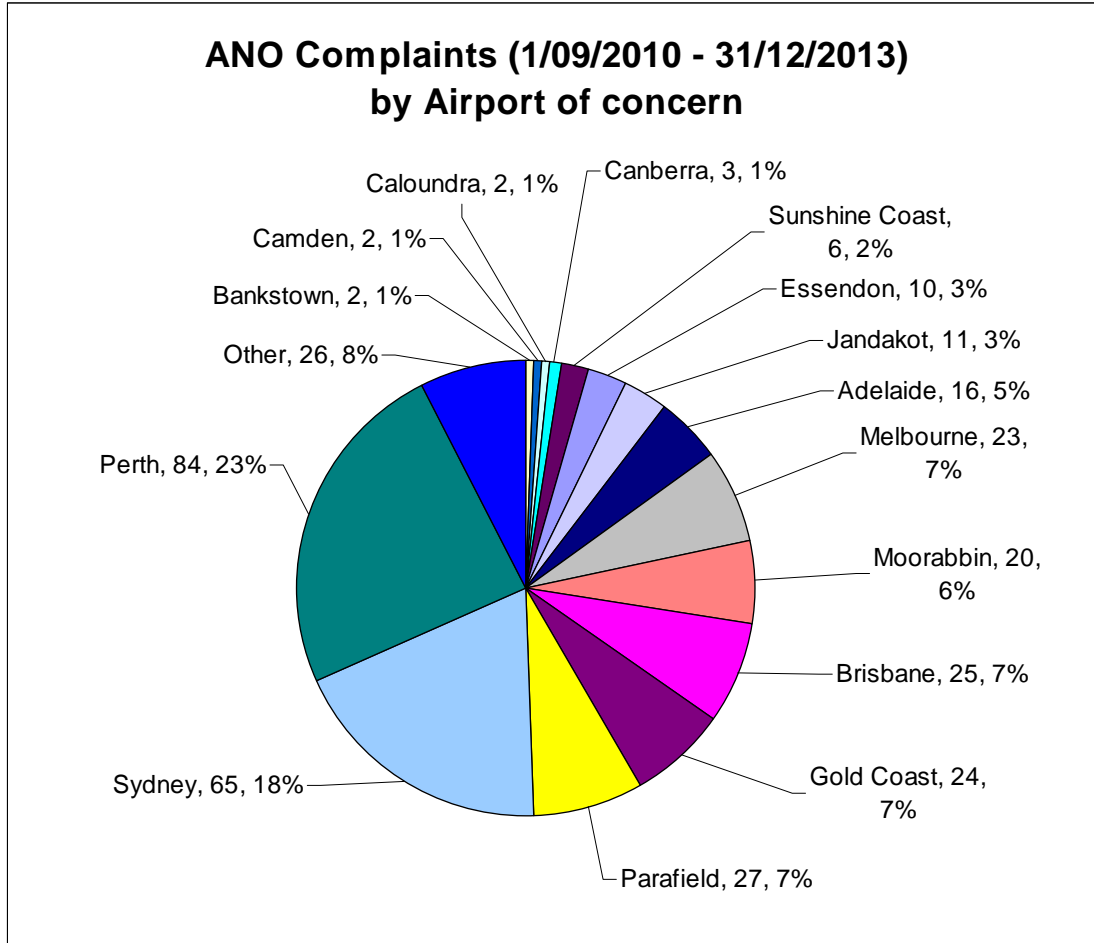
Ron Brent  
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman  
21 January 2014

## Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics for the quarter.

	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Total for quarter	Total from 1 Sep 10 to 31 Dec 13
Complaints received:	9	8	6	23	346
Complaints closed:	17	6	5	25	327
<b>Complaints closed - not reviewed:</b>					<b>76</b>
Complainant did not provide further information					16
Outside charter scope					17
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					43
<b>Complaints closed - reviewed:</b>					<b>251</b>
No change possible - explanation provided					211
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					8
Change adopted by Airport operator					23
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					9
Average time taken to close complaints: (including weekends and public holidays)					<b>67 days</b>

The following graph shows complaints received about airports since the ANO began.



## Attachment 2 Attachment 2 ANO assessment of action on Review Recommendations

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

Since the last report to the Board, one recommendation from the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney (March 2012)* has been closed, leaving just two recommendations still ongoing.

The ANO has closed Recommendation 3 from the Sydney Issues report, which recommended “Airservices should provide more textual and qualitative assessment of aircraft noise in reporting”. Closure is based on improvements to the public reports made over time, and on the introduction of new issues categories into Airservices’ complaints database in November 2013 and which will be reflected in reports published from Q1/2014 onwards.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices’ response
<p><b>Sydney Issues Recommendation 2:</b></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 has been undertaken to improve the maps produced in reports.</p> <p>The ANO will review the new versions before determining closure of this Recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Sydney Issues Recommendation 7:</b></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>

Note: Our recently completed Case Studies in Complaint Management review will be published shortly. Progress against the recommendations will be reported in the next quarterly report.