

## ANO INVESTIGATION INTO COMPLAINTS ABOUT FLIGHT PATHS OVER EAST MELBOURNE (JUNE 2021)

### BOARD STATEMENT IN RESPONSE

During 2020, the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) commenced an investigation into complaints about flight paths over East Melbourne. The ANO's subsequent report was received on 10 June 2021 and made three recommendations which Airservices has accepted.

We note, as the ANO has, that the principal conduct giving rise to the complaints in this investigation occurred between 2012 and 2018. Since that time we have implemented significant change to improve our approach to community engagement during the flight path design process, including implementing all of the recommendations from the ANO's *Review of Airservices Australia's systems for community engagement* (April 2020). We welcome the ANO's assessment that further recommendations in this respect are not required.

In response to the recommendations made, the following is noted:

**Recommendation 1: I recommend Airservices continue its efforts to engage with the complainants to resolve their complaints including careful consideration of the alternate flight path suggested by them.**

Our people are continuing to work with the East Melbourne Group (EMG) to address the concerns raised. We are assessing a suggested noise improvement submitted by EMG to determine if it is safe, compliant and feasible (an outcome of this assessment is expected before the end of 2021, noting that shifting noise from one community to another is not a feasible outcome). A detailed report confirming if the proposed change is feasible, having considered all factors, including the requirements of our Flight Path Design Principles, will be prepared to close out this action.

Our people have also engaged with Moorabbin and Essendon airports to have additional information on noise sensitive locations added to their Fly Neighbourly Agreements<sup>1</sup>.

**Recommendation 2: Airservices provide a copy of this report to Essendon Airport and invite it to review the community membership of its Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) and consider the adequacy of the representation of communities affected by aircraft noise.**

A copy of this report will be provided to Essendon Airport. Our people will provide the ANO recommendation to broaden the Essendon CACG membership to include representatives from communities affected by their operations (particularly sightseeing) to airport management and CACG Chair.

**Recommendation 3: As part of its regular attendance at other airports' CACG meetings, or equivalents, Airservices should present the findings of this report and invite the CACGs to review the adequacy of their representation of their community membership given that the aircraft noise from "smart tracking" flight paths and sightseeing operations affects areas at considerable distances from airports.**

Our people are regular participants in CACG meetings across Australia. A review of complaint hotspots for each CACG location will be conducted and the outcomes will be shared with airport management and CACG chairs in response to the ANO's recommendation that CACG's review the adequacy of their membership and request broader representation. Where we have a new flight path change project, our people will request an expansion of the CACGs for the duration of the project to include potentially affected locations. Our *Community Engagement Framework* will continue to be implemented, which is not reliant on CACG membership to achieve appropriate engagement reach.

We thank the ANO for providing this report and its recommendations.

19 July 2021

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<sup>1</sup> A **Fly Neighbourly Agreement** is a voluntary code of practice negotiated between airports and aircraft operators to reduce the disturbance caused by aircraft operations within a particular area. It may include limitation on height, frequency and areas of operation.