



Quarterly Report  
April - June 2016

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Complaint handling.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4 Consultation .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5 Information Provision .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Attachment 2 Outstanding ANO recommendations.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Attachment 3 Terms of Reference – Review of Defence’s Aircraft Noise Complaints Management System .....</b>	<b>11</b>

## 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a summary of ANO activities during the April to June 2016 quarter. It is structured around the three key functions of the ANO, these being the 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

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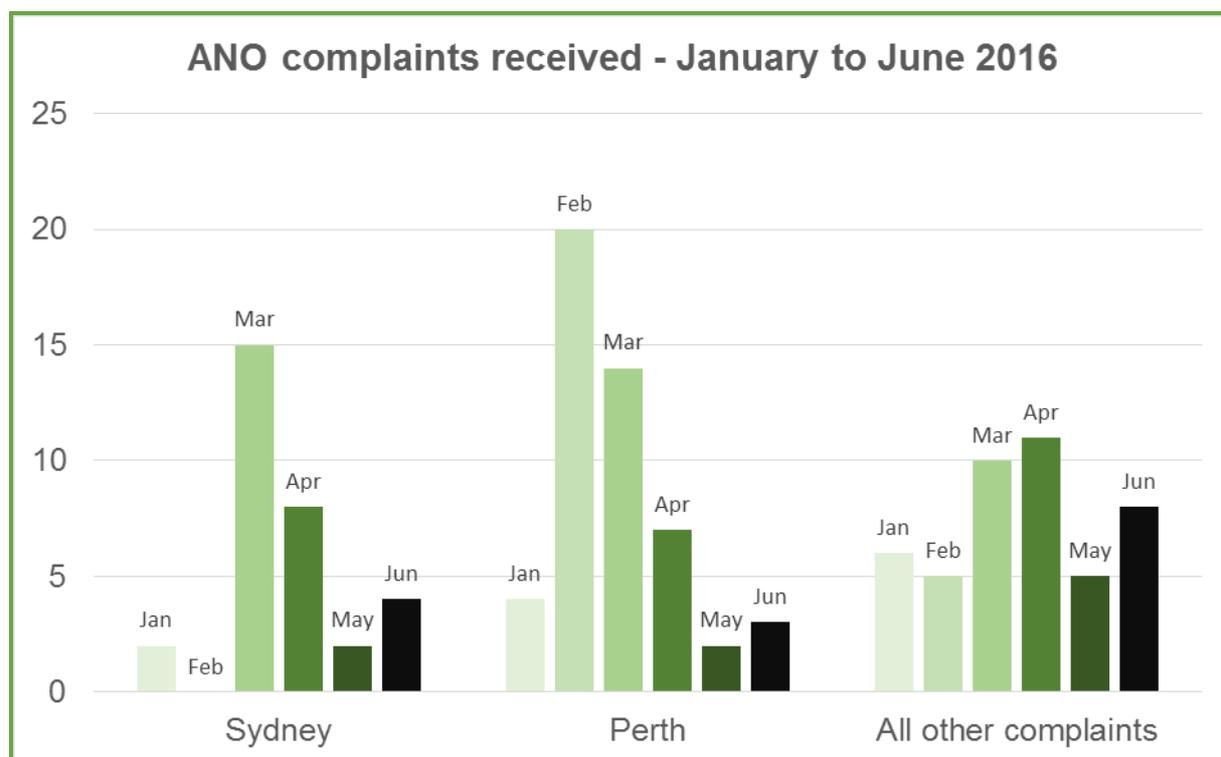
- 2.1 During the quarter the ANO experienced a notable reduction in complaint numbers, largely reflecting a fall in the level of concern arising from Perth and the Gold Coast. In May and June the number of complaints received were back in line with what had been the long-term average before 2015.
- 2.2 The ANO was pleased to finalise the Terms of Reference for an upcoming *Review of Defence's Aircraft Noise Complaint Handling System*, available on the ANO website and at **Attachment 3**. The objective is to review the effectiveness of Defence's handling of complaints relating to aircraft noise, and to recommend improvements where appropriate. This will include benchmarking against the requirements for 'Operation of the Complaint Management System' set out in the Australian/New Zealand Standard 10002:2014 "Guidelines for complaint management in organizations".
- 2.3 Since our last report, Airservices and Defence have made significant progress in addressing the outstanding recommendations from the ANO reviews completed last year:
- Defence has completed actions leading to closure of six recommendations this quarter, leaving just five of the 12 recommendations outstanding from the *Review of Australian Super Hornet Flying Operations at RAAF Base Amberley (August 2015)*. This included publication of an updated Noise Management Plan, amended Standing Instructions, updated website content and improved Noise and Flight Path data capture.
  - Airservices has completed actions to address 12 recommendations during this quarter, leaving ten of 25 recommendations outstanding from the *Investigation into Complaints about the Perth Noise Improvement Proposals (November 2015)*. This included publication of an amended *Communication and Consultation Protocol*, publication of the Terms of Reference (TORs) for Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) on the changes introduced last year and demonstrated improvements in community engagement.

**Attachment 2** provides a summary of progress against all recommendations.

- 2.4 In April, the ANO recognised Tim Abberton's role in the ANO office with a change in title to Deputy Aircraft Noise Ombudsman. More information is available on the ANO website: <http://www.ano.gov.au/news/>.

### 3 Complaint handling

- 3.1 During the quarter the ANO received 49 new complaints, three of which related to Defence aircraft noise management. Over half (26) of these complaints were received in April and, as with recent quarters, related largely to Sydney and Perth issues.
- 3.2 The graph below shows the monthly fluctuations since the start of 2016 for these two locations, alongside the total of all other complaints. It clearly shows the extent to which the Perth and Sydney complaints account for much of the ANO complaint load.



- 3.3 In Sydney, the increase in complaints during March and April was mainly from residents in the north-eastern suburbs complaining about a recent increase in aircraft activity and residents in the Blue Mountains suggesting that there are more Sydney departing flights flying over and at lower altitudes.
- 3.4 In Perth, complaints this year have largely related to concerns about Airservices' validation study (which was announced in early February and ran from 15 February to 10 April) and runway works undertaken by Perth Airport (between April and June), which have required increased use of the cross-runway.
- 3.5 At the end of the quarter 17 complaints were open, 55 complaints were closed and 35 reviewed in detail.
- 3.6 Additional complaint statistics are included at **Attachment 1**.

### Seeking noise improvement opportunities

- 3.7 A core focus of ANO investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. Generally there are very few opportunities for change as Airservices and Defence have previously identified change opportunities where there are any.
- 3.8 During the quarter, the ANO identified one potential noise improvement from a Sydney complaint and Airservices is now considering the opportunity further - see Table 1 (below).

**Table 1: Noise improvement opportunities**

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
Mar 2016	Sydney: adjustment to flight paths over water during curfew hours	The ANO has asked Airservices to consider if a better noise outcome can be achieved for coastal residents south of Sydney Airport affected by flights departing during the curfew. Airservices added this opportunity to its Strategic Noise Improvement Plan and have commenced preliminary investigations into the feasibility of a change.

### Seeking improvements in aircraft noise complaint handling

- 3.9 Last quarter the ANO identified some opportunities for improved complaint handling as a result of two complaints received about a military training exercise near Canberra. The cases highlighted a number of issues with coordination of complaints between Airservices and Defence as well as with how Defence manages complaints that are not related directly to activities at an Air Force base. The ANO will further respond to these matters as part of the Review of Defence's Aircraft Noise Complaints Handling System.

## 4 Consultation

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- 4.1 The ANO office attended a number of airport consultative meetings and other industry engagements during the quarter. This helps with the ANO's role of monitoring Airservices' and Defence's consultation and information provision as well as fostering industry-wide understanding and awareness of aircraft noise management issues. Meetings attended included:

Annual Aviation Industry Noise Forum, Sydney Airport Community Forum, Standards Australia management meeting, Jandakot Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group meeting, Perth Airport Municipalities Group meeting, Perth Airport Community Forum, Gold Coast Community Aviation Consultation Group meeting, Brisbane Community Aviation Consultation Group meeting, Government Aviation Complaints Handling Forum, Defence-run Aircraft Noise Course, Australian Mayoral Aviation Council (AMAC) annual conference, Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association (ANZOA) biennial conference, and 11th ACI Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly Conference and Exhibition.

4.2 The ANO has noted the careful and timely engagement by Airservices about the Perth short-term validation study, changes to its email complaint system, and roll-out of the Aircraft Navigation Modernisation program. A number of recommendations from the Perth Review have been closed on the basis of demonstrated improvements in community engagement by Airservices, reflected in an updated Communication and Consultation Protocol, which was published in early July.

## 5 Information Provision

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5.1 Both the *Investigation into Complaints about the Perth Noise Improvement Proposals* for Airservices and the *Review of Australian Super Hornet Flying Operations at RAAF Base Amberley (August 2015)* for Defence include recommendations about improving public information. **Attachment 2** summarises progress against the recommendations of the reports.

5.2 The ANO has been pleased to see Airservices moving towards an enhanced online reporting capability that will help community and industry stakeholders to access more timely information about aircraft activity and noise recordings at the major airports. Additionally, Airservices has made effective use of new functionality in its complaints management system to directly communicate with large sub-sets of the complainant group. Airservices has provide targeted information updates on issues of potential interest to select residents by email, SMS or post. Direct contact like this is likely to be far more effective in communicating than only publishing information on a website.

## 6 Conclusions

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6.1 The ANO has received fewer complaints this quarter compared to the last quarter and closed over 50 complaints in the period.

6.2 We have been very pleased with the progress made by Airservices and Defence on the recommendations arising from our reports of last year. We have also initiated a new review into Defence's aircraft noise complaints handling system and are looking forward to progressing this over the next quarter.



Ron Brent  
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman  
15 July 2016

## Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following tables summarise the complaint statistics both for the quarter and also since the establishment of the ANO.

<b>AIRSERVICES</b>	<b>Apr 2016</b>	<b>May 2016</b>	<b>Jun 2016</b>	<b>Total for quarter</b>
Complaints received:	26	8	12	<b>46</b>
Complaints closed:	26	14	12	<b>52</b>

Total complaints closed - not reviewed:				
Complainant did not provide further information	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Outside charter scope	1	0	2	<b>3</b>
Referred to Airservices to respond directly	12	1	2	<b>15</b>

Total complaints closed - reviewed:				
No change possible - explanation provided	11	13	8	<b>32</b>
Change adopted by Airservices Australia	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Change adopted by Airport operator	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Change adopted by Aircraft operator	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>Apr 2016</b>	<b>May 2016</b>	<b>Jun 2016</b>	<b>Total for quarter</b>
Complaints received:	0	1	2	<b>3</b>
Complaints closed:	2	1	0	<b>3</b>

Total complaints closed - not reviewed:				
Complainant did not provide further information	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Outside charter scope	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Referred to Defence to respond directly	0	1	0	<b>1</b>

Total complaints closed - reviewed:				
No change possible - explanation provided	2	0	0	<b>2</b>
Change adopted by Defence	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

	<b>Airservices</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>Total</b>
Complaints carried forward on 1 Apr	21	2	23
Complaints received	46	3	49
Complaints closed	52	3	55
Complaints open at 1 July	15	2	17

## 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. Recommendations that were previously reported as complete have been removed.

### Super Hornet Review (August 2015)

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<b>Recommendation 1</b> – Defence should adopt appropriate record management practices to ensure identified gaps in record-keeping are addressed.	<u>Ongoing</u> – Defence has advised it has addressed this recommendation. ANO is seeking evidence to support Defence advice.
<b>Recommendation 2</b> – 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>Complete</u> – The ANO is satisfied that Defence has worked with the NFPMS supplier to improve the accuracy and reliability of the data captured and reported.
<b>Recommendation 3</b> – 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>Complete</u> – The ANO has reviewed the updated Noise Management Plan and the amended Standing Instructions to confirm alignment.
<b>Recommendation 4</b> – Defence should as soon as possible a. conduct a review of the state of implementation against the recommendations of the Vipac report completed in 2011. b. 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 seeking evidence to support Defence advice.
<b>Recommendation 6</b> – Defence should review the reporting requirements in the Noise Management Plan and establish systems to ensure adherence to the requirements.	<u>Ongoing</u> – The ANO has reviewed Defence's systems and is seeking supporting data to confirm reporting requirements are adhered to.
<b>Recommendation 7</b> – 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.	<u>Complete</u> – Defence has amended the relevant Standing Instruction to specify accountabilities for annual reviews and implemented a system for recording reviews.
<b>Recommendation 8</b> – Defence should ensure that future quarterly reports include information to support the requirements of the current version of Noise Monitoring and Complaints Handling Strategy.	<u>Ongoing</u> – Defence has advised that work on this recommendation is ongoing with completion expected in Q3 2016.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<b>Recommendation 9</b> – Defence should publish reports and meeting minutes in a reasonable timeframe.	<u>Complete</u> – Defence has updated its website with all current reports and meeting minutes and introduced a tracking system to ensure ongoing compliance.
<b>Recommendation 10</b> – Defence should expedite establishment of an online complaint lodgement capability.	<u>Ongoing</u> – Defence has advised that work on this recommendation is ongoing with completion expected by end 2016.
<b>Recommendation 11</b> – 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.	<u>Complete</u> – Defence has amended the relevant Standing Instruction to specify accountabilities for annual reviews and implemented a system for recording reviews.
<b>Recommendation 12</b> – 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.	<u>Complete</u> – Defence has amended the relevant Standing Instruction to specify accountabilities for annual reviews and implemented a system for recording reviews.

### Perth Noise Initiatives Review (November 2015)

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> Airservices should explain the discrepancy in its public information when compared to their detailed Environmental Assessment and, if found to be in error, correct all public information and, as far as practicable, advise all individuals who had received incorrect data of the correction.	<u>Ongoing</u> – The ANO notes that Airservices has corrected its public website information. The ANO will finalise this recommendation when the PIR is released, as we are advised it will be sent directly to individuals reflecting corrected information.
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> For all changes to air traffic management that will have an effect on aircraft noise impacts, Airservices should provide clear information to the public on both the justification for the change and the expected changes in aircraft noise in time for meaningful consultation and certainly prior to implementation of the change.	<u>Complete</u> – Airservices has amended its Communication and Consultation Protocol. The ANO has noted the early consultations on the Aircraft Navigation Modernisation Program provided clear information on the expected aircraft noise outcome and justification for the change.
<b>Recommendation 4:</b> Airservices should present potential aircraft noise impacts accurately and avoid under-statement.	<u>Complete</u> – Airservices demonstrated improved presentation of aircraft noise impacts in the information provided as part of the validation study conducted in Feb-Apr 2016 and also in the PIR TORs.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> Airservices should review and amend the currently available information about the preferred runways change to clearly present the expected noise outcomes.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has clearly presented the expected noise outcomes from the preferred runways change in its PIR TORs.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> Airservices should ensure that its post-implementation review of the preferred runways change addresses whether the change actually represents an overall noise improvement for Perth, considering the impacts across all areas that have been affected by the change. If the change does not deliver an overall noise improvement for Perth, Airservices should revert to previous arrangements or propose an alternative that is expected to deliver a noise improvement.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> – This will be considered when the preferred runways PIR, due to be completed in Sept 2016, is finalised by Airservices.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> Airservices' post-implementation review of the preferred runways change should include a discussion of the impacts of the change in all areas affected, including for the suburbs affected by departures and arrivals to each end of each runway.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices' PIR TORs outline that these requirements will be addressed in the preferred runways PIR, due to be completed in Sept 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> Airservices should review the feedback from the ANO about its Environmental Assessments and incorporate better analysis of aircraft noise issues and impacts in its environmental assessment processes. This should include introduction of a robust process of critical review before finalisation of assessments.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> – Airservices has advised that it is developing a 'Procedure Manual for Undertaking Environmental Assessments', due to be completed by quarter 3, 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> Airservices' post-implementation review should present the impacts of changes in different areas at night-time, and specifically the impact in terms of nights of respite.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices' PIR TORs outline that these requirements will be addressed in the preferred runways PIR, due to be completed in Sept 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11:</b> Airservices should resolve its internal communication issues to ensure correct, adequate and timely information is provided to internal decision-makers, the ANO and the public about change proposals.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has amended its Communication and Consultation Protocol and also redefined its internal processes and accountabilities for noise improvement change proposals.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b> Airservices' post-implementation review should provide an explanation for why the change was implemented on a permanent basis despite the Environmental Assessment conclusion, and also assess the adequacy of community consultation undertaken.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> – This will be considered when the preferred runways PIR, due to be completed in Sept 2016, is finalised by Airservices.</p>

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b> Airservices should review its decision-making processes related to the introduction of this change and report to the ANO and the Board on any changes it will introduce to ensure that future air traffic management changes are made with due consideration to relevant information.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has redefined its internal processes and accountabilities for noise improvement change proposals, aligning it with the change processes for any air traffic management change.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 14:</b> Airservices should target its community consultations to areas that are identified as potentially affected by the proposed change and ensure that communities receive all relevant information in a reasonable time to be able to provide feedback on changes prior to implementation.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has amended its Communication and Consultation Protocol, restating its commitment to information provision and timely, targeted community consultation.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b> Airservices should include in its post-implementation review a detailed analysis of the actual impacts of the introduction of smart tracking and the associated change made to the visual approach route. It should consider impacts particularly at night-time, and re-visit the findings of the Environmental Assessment to determine if the change in fact did represent a potentially significant impact within the meaning of the EPBC Act.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices’ PIR TORs outline that these requirements will be addressed in the smart tracking PIR, due to be completed in Dec 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16:</b> Airservices’ material in support of a proposed change should explicitly present how the negatives are balanced by the benefits and on what basis the chosen approach is optimal compared to viable alternatives.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has amended its Communication and Consultation Protocol, to include providing balanced information on the potential impacts and benefits of a change.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 17:</b> In announcing proposed changes, Airservices should explicitly emphasise the degree of uncertainty and the known factors that will potentially influence the likelihood of the proposed change proceeding.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has amended its Communication and Consultation Protocol, to include providing information on the processes (including legislative processes) required to implement a change as part of the consultation information.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 19:</b> Airservices should consult openly with communities, even when making only temporary changes, and provide as much information as it can prior to implementing any such change.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has acknowledged and restated its commitment to open consultation in its amended Communication and Consultation Protocol. The ANO noted the effective consultation undertaken prior to Airservices’ temporary validation study in Feb-Apr 2016.</p>

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<p><b>Recommendation 20:</b> Airservices should produce a proposal assessment for each change that provides a comprehensible outline of any change proposal, including the pros and cons, key considerations, the conclusion and the final decision Airservices has made. Relevant material that underpins the decisions should also be published for those seeking greater detail.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> – Airservices has advised that it is developing a ‘Procedure Manual for Undertaking Environmental Assessments’, due to be completed by quarter 3, 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 21:</b> Airservices should ensure its Environmental Assessments for changes in air traffic arrangements reflect a thorough and transparent analysis of all key issues relevant to aircraft noise impacts, and specifically reflecting the key issues and concerns of communities.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u> – Airservices has advised that it is developing a ‘Procedure Manual for Undertaking Environmental Assessments’, due to be completed by quarter 3, 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 22:</b> Airservices should tailor its public announcements about aircraft noise management to address the specific concerns and expectations of affected communities, as identified in consultation forums and aircraft noise complaints.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices has acknowledged and restated its commitment to tailored public consultation strategies in its amended Communication and Consultation Protocol. The ANO noted the effective consultation undertaken prior to Airservices’ short-term validation study in Feb-Apr 2016.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 23:</b> As far as practical, Airservices should make direct contact with community leaders prior to public announcements about issues that affect the community to help ensure that consistent information is passed on to residents.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – The ANO considers that Airservices acknowledges the value in prior consultation for significant changes affecting specific community groups.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 24:</b> Airservices should not pursue the noise-respite trial as proposed in March 2015, even as a short term trial measure, and instead should put out clear information as to the inequitable consequences that would necessarily flow in terms of night-time respite.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – The ANO notes that Airservices conducted a short-term validation study in Feb-Apr 2016, contrary to this recommendation, however it did provide an opportunity for clarifying the inequitable night-time respite consequences from the proposed southern departure path.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 25:</b> Airservices should set out the rationale behind the preferred runways and smart tracking changes implemented in Perth, including identifying the anticipated impacts in terms of aircraft movements and aircraft noise consequences, well ahead of the planned post-implementation review of these changes.</p>	<p><u>Complete</u> – Airservices’ PIR TORs outlines the rationale behind the two changes, with the PIRs due to be completed in Sept 2016 (preferred runways) and Dec 2016 (smart tracking).</p>

## Attachment 3 Terms of Reference – Review of Defence’s Aircraft Noise Complaints Management System

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<b>Review Objectives</b>	<p>To review the effectiveness of Defence’s handling of complaints relating to aircraft noise, and to recommend improvements where appropriate.</p> <p>This will include benchmarking against the requirements for ‘Operation of the Complaint Management System’ set out in Chapter 8 of the Australian /New Zealand Standard 10002:2014 “Guidelines for complaint management in organizations” (the Standard).</p>	
<b>Review Scope</b>	<p>The review will assess Defence’s management of aircraft noise complaints against the Standard’s guidance for ‘Operation of the Complaint Management System’, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication: public information about Defence’s aircraft noise complaints process</li> <li>• Providing support: provision of support and practical assistance to people to make an aircraft noise complaint, if required</li> <li>• Early resolution: enabling resolution at first point of contact, where possible</li> <li>• Receipt of complaint: including recording complaint details and supporting information</li> <li>• Tracking of complaint: including regular updates to complainant</li> <li>• Acknowledgement of complaint: including timeliness and communication medium</li> <li>• Managing the complaint: from initial assessment through to resolution</li> <li>• Closing the complaint, review and record keeping</li> <li>• Monitoring implementation of recommendations/remedies</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, other relevant aspects of the Standard may be referenced, for example the three level model of complaint handling outlined in Appendix H.</p> <p>The review is expected to include site visits to Air Force Headquarters, Headquarters Air Command and other sites as required, to interview and consult with relevant stakeholders and key personnel.</p> <p>A report will be prepared on the findings and submitted to the Chief of Air Force. It will include recommendations for improvements in aircraft noise complaints management where relevant.</p>	
<b>Report</b>	Draft: August 2016	Final: October 2016