



Quarterly Report  
April – June 2014

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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 April to June 2014 quarter. It 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.
- 1.2 Please note that the ANO office has also produced our 2013-14 Annual Report. It provides an overview of the activities and achievements of this office during the past 12 months, including some case studies, analysis of changing trends, and a summary of the noise improvement opportunities finalised in the year.

## 2 Overview

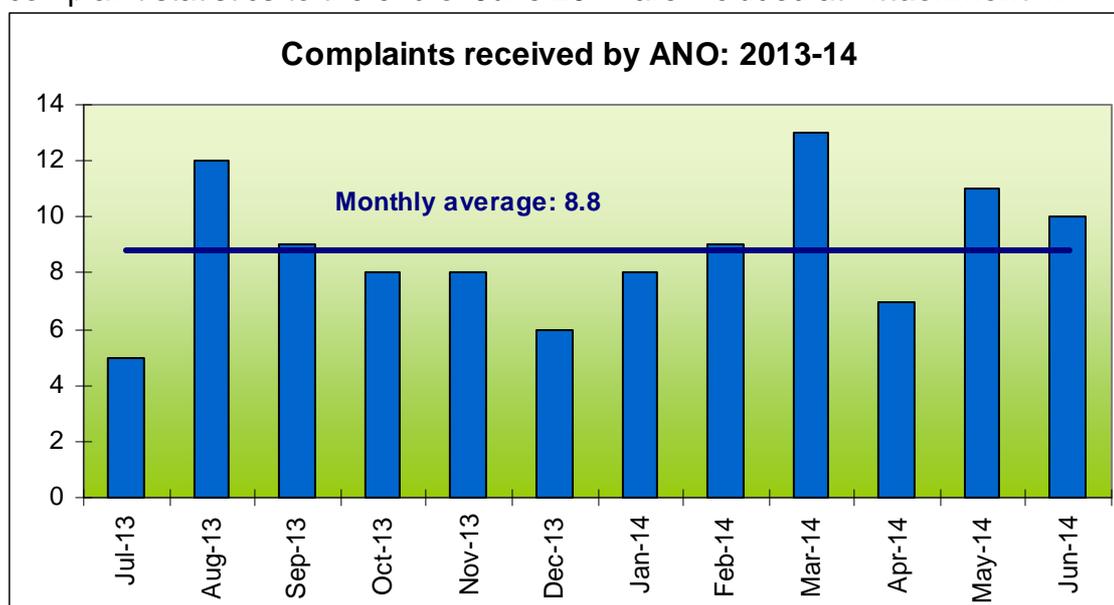
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- 2.1 We have been pleased to see progress by Airservices in addressing some of the recommendations from our Case Studies Review. Three parts of two recommendations have now been completed and we are aware that work is well underway on the other recommendations.
- 2.2 Further, one of the outstanding recommendations from the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* report was also closed this quarter, leaving just one recommendation from this review to be completed. The ANO has met with Airservices' representatives about this and notes that action is underway.

## 3 Complaint handling

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- 3.1 In the quarter the ANO received 28 new individual complaints, which is just above the average across the financial year. This brings the total number of complaints received to 106 for the financial year and 403 since we commenced operations in September 2010. At the end of the quarter 15 complaints were open and will be carried forward into the new financial year. More detailed complaint statistics to the end of June 2014 are included at **Attachment 1**.



## Seeking noise improvement opportunities

3.2 A core focus of our investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. There is currently one potential noise opportunity under investigation that stems directly from complaints to the ANO, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Noise improvement opportunities identified during the quarter**

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
May 2014	Gold Coast: flights over NSW residences during daylight saving hours	The ANO has asked Airservices to look into whether a better noise outcome can be achieved for NSW residents affected by flights departing Gold Coast Airport prior to 11pm QLD time (that is, prior to the curfew commencing), when the two states are on different zones. The difference means aircraft fly over NSW homes after 11pm NSW time.  Airservices has added this opportunity to their Strategic Noise Improvement Plan and has committed to considering it further.

3.3 There were no noise improvement opportunities stemming from complaints received by the ANO that were finalised during the Apr-Jun 2014 quarter.

3.4 Table 2 outlines those matters that the ANO is monitoring in response to complaints. These are matters that are long-term or ongoing work being managed by Airservices. The ANO complaints have been closed on the basis that Airservices is managing the matter but we are monitoring Airservices' handling of the issues until they are completed.

**Table 2: Noise improvement opportunities – ANO monitoring Airservices' management**

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
Nov 2010	Perth – Can the flight path over Roleystone be relocated to an area that does not affect so many residences?	In Aug 2013, Airservices commenced a 12 month trial of an alternative flight path, following which Airservices will make a decision about permanent implementation.
Apr 2012	Brisbane – Can some northbound and westbound departures from runway 19 depart on additional tracks to reduce the concentration of noise over current areas?	Airservices examined the option of a noise sharing approach, where a single departure track is replaced with multiple tracks to enhance noise sharing.  Airservices identified that such an arrangement has not previously been trialled in Australia, however, Airservices intends to consider this approach in the future.  Trials of this approach are not likely to be held in Brisbane initially due to the operational constraints of the airport. This type of trial is unlikely to commence elsewhere before 2015.

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?	Airservices has investigated several opportunities, including one that has led to a trial of a changed departure procedure. The trial ended in March 2014 and following analysis of the results Airservices has proposed to permanently adopt the changed departure procedure. Airservices is currently pursuing the appropriate change process, including environmental assessment and consultation.
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. With assistance from the ANO, Airservices has undertaken discussions with relevant stakeholders and is helping update the fly neighbourly agreement to specify residential areas to be avoided where possible, and minimum altitudes where over-flight cannot be avoided. The updated agreement is yet to be ratified by all parties and the ANO will keep monitoring until it is.
Oct 2013 – Mar 2014	Fly Neighbourly Agreements – Tyagarah, Traralgon, Tyabb	The ANO is monitoring Airservices' management of noise issues in these locations, stemming from a number of complaints. Airservices has agreed to continue offering their assistance to the relevant local councils to establish fly neighbourly agreements with operators and to keep residents notified of progress.

## 4 Consultation

- 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 This quarter, we have met with senior staff from a number of airports about their Master Planning activities underway this year. We have provided constructive feedback on presenting information about aircraft noise issues based on our understanding of public concerns about noise issues and noise information.

## 5 Information Provision

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- 5.1 We have been very pleased with the enhanced Aircraft Noise Information Reports (ANIRs) produced by Airservices for quarter 1 of 2014. By improving the clarity of the maps, these new report formats have addressed one of the outstanding recommendations from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* report, leaving just one recommendation still to be closed.
- 5.2 Perhaps more importantly, we have been impressed to see the greater descriptive and analytical detail included in the new report formats. Particularly pleasing are the sections that describe noise improvement opportunities under investigation, planned for future consideration and recently finalised. In our view these reports are now providing a much better picture of the aircraft noise issues in the regions they describe, and will help residents to make better decisions about how they wish to manage the noise issues they are experiencing.
- 5.3 We have also identified a number of recommendations for further improvement of public information, along with improved complaint handling, in our *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report, published in January 2014. During the period Airservices has completed three parts of two recommendations.
- 5.4 Attachment 2 lists the two ongoing recommendations from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* report and all recommendations from our *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report.

## 6 Conclusions

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- 6.1 We have kept this to a relatively brief, essentially statistical update this quarter, to avoid duplication with content presented in our Annual Report.
- 6.2 It has nonetheless been a productive quarter. I have been particularly satisfied with Airservices' progress with their new ANIR formats and with the work they have undertaken so far on the recommendations from our *Case Studies* review. I anticipate many more recommendations will be closed off in the next quarter.



Ron Brent  
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman  
10 July 2014

## Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics both for the quarter and also since the establishment of the ANO.

	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun 2014	Total for quarter	Total from 1 Sep 10 to 30 Jun 14
Complaints received:	7	11	10	28	404
Complaints closed:	12	8	9	29	390
Total complaints closed - not reviewed:					<b>103</b>
Complainant did not provide further information					17
Outside charter scope					19
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					67
Total complaints closed - reviewed:					<b>287</b>
No change possible - explanation provided					242
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					11
Change adopted by Airport operator					24
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					10

## Attachment 2 ANO assessment of action on Review Recommendations

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

### **Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney (March 2012)**

Since the last report to the Board, one of the two ongoing recommendations for the *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney* report has been closed, as per the table below.

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>Airservices has enhanced the maps and analysis in their public noise information reports.</p> <p>Recommendation closed.</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 has met with Airservices' representatives about this and notes that action is underway.</p>

### **Case Studies in Complaint Management (January 2014)**

Airservices has been actively pursuing work in response to all recommendations made in the *Case Studies in Complaint Management* report. Several sub-parts of recommendations have been closed, although no complete recommendation is yet finalised. The table below summarises the status of recommendations.

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p><b>Case Studies Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>amend its contact acknowledgement and reference numbering system. Complainants should not be notified of a new reference number for each and every contact made. Complainants advised that responses will not be made on a particular issue, should not be responded to on that issue. Airservices should clarify what the reference number provided to complainants actually means</li> <li>acknowledge the lack of timeliness, apologise and provide a brief explanation for the delay where service delivery standards are not met</li> <li>be mindful of balancing the resource burden with the value to the complainant when considering the provision of ongoing information, particularly if similar information has already been provided. Procedures or guidelines should be established to assist staff with making these decisions.</li> </ol>	<p>Airservices action plan finalised.</p>

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p><b>Case Studies Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. as far as practicable, assign complaints to an airport, rather than a generic category</li> <li>b. provide reports to airports that provide sufficient detail to help identify meaningful issues and avenues for potential improvements</li> <li>c. be clear to complainants about what is, and is not, provided to airports about their complaint</li> <li>d. ensure that information provided to complainants is accurate and does not potentially misrepresent the situation, or contradict other information published by Airservices on their website</li> <li>e. consider opportunities to take the lead in consulting various stakeholders as part of the process to identify noise improvement outcomes, rather than refer complainants to those stakeholders with the expectation that the complainant will manage that consultation process.</li> </ul>	<p>Parts 2a and 2d completed.</p> <p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address the remaining parts of this recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Case Studies Recommendation 3:</b></p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. develop and implement processes to ensure all appropriate information about complainants is passed to other authorities when undertaking a transfer of a complaint</li> <li>b. clarify when a response will be provided. Information linked to the complaint form should explain that a response will be provided where specifically requested, where a question has been asked or where a response can provide useful and relevant information. The exception to this rule should be when a complainant has explicitly requested no response or when a complainant has been advised previously that the particular issue has been dealt with to finality.</li> </ul>	<p>Airservices action plan finalised.</p>
<p><b>Case Studies Recommendation 4:</b></p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. store all correspondence relating to a complaint in a single repository, accessible to all complaint handlers and, to the extent practicable, accessible through the relevant NCMS database record</li> <li>b. ensure complaint records are managed in compliance with the National Archives Act 1983 as well as relevant Australian Standards and Australian Government recommended practices.</li> <li>c. standardise the salutations, introductory text and sign-off styles used for correspondence with complaints</li> <li>d. carefully consider the expectations created by encouraging further contact and only do so when appropriate</li> <li>e. use other means to contact clients whenever details have been provided and the primary means of contact fails.</li> </ul>	<p>Part 4a completed.</p> <p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address the remaining parts of this recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Case Studies Recommendation 5:</b></p> <p>Airservices should routinely analyse complaints to identify common issues not yet addressed by the current suite of fact sheets and develop fact sheets or standard responses for residents raising the same issues.</p>	<p>The ANO is aware that action is underway by Airservices to address this recommendation.</p>

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of Airservices' response
<p><b>Case Studies Recommendation 6:</b></p> <p>Airservices should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. establish clear protocols for when residents are to be referred directly to an external authority</li> <li>b. review its Guide and Protocols documents and current practices to ensure that documented procedures for managing unreasonable complainant behaviour are followed in practice, including consistent and timely application of management plans for persistent complainants, and ensuring that it is cases of unreasonable behaviour that are subject to 'formal restriction' not complainants</li> <li>c. check compliance with its Guide and Protocols in an internal audit/review process for complaint management.</li> </ul>	<p>Airservices action plan finalised.</p>