



# Quarterly Report

## January – March 2013

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## 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and commentary on the operations of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) during the January to March 2013 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 Overview

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- 2.1 During the quarter we have closed all of the recommendations associated with our first two major reviews. While aspects of these recommendations continue to be implemented and will evolve over time, we have determined that the intent has been adopted by Airservices to the extent that our continuing monitoring now becomes part of our ongoing charter to review and monitor Airservices' management of aircraft noise, rather than being part of monitoring a specific recommendation.
- 2.2 The Sydney review is almost implemented too, with the final three recommendations likely to be actioned before our next quarterly report is issued.
- 2.3 Our focus has now turned to our new review of complaint management using case studies from Airservices' more recent complaints. The aim is to identify any lessons learnt, or opportunities for improvement, through analysis of a select sample of complaints that have not resulted in the complainant contacting the ANO. Terms of reference for this review were published in December 2012.

## 3 Complaint handling

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- 3.1 In the quarter, the ANO received 28 new individual complaints. This brings the total number of complaints received by the end of March 2013 to 283. Of these, 256 are closed. The final breakdown of the complaint statistics, updated with figures to the end of March 2013 is included at **Attachment 1**.
- 3.2 Since we started operations in September 2010, the ANO has been pursuing potential noise improvement opportunities with Airservices (and where appropriate with the Airport or operator involved) that have arisen from complaints lodged with the ANO. These opportunities stem from issues raised either by one complainant or several.
- 3.3 We are pleased that, through serious consideration and follow up on complaints, the ANO is able to work with Airservices to deliver positive changes to noise outcomes (see Table 2 below) or, at the very least, clearly explain why a potential change is not viable.

3.4 Unfortunately, in many of these cases the time taken by Airservices to investigate and implement change has been unduly long and many cases remain under investigation (Table 1 below). In some case, there are understandable reasons for the delay, particularly centred on the degree of reform required within Airservices to implement a noise improvement change process. This process necessarily cannot allow any compromise in safety.

3.5 We have not previously described these initiatives in our reports, however, given that they represent a large part of our workload, we have decided to include the following tables for the information of the Board and the community.

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

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	Airservices tabled a high level overview of the proposal at the Community Aviation Consultation group meeting in February 2013. Support was given to further develop and investigate the proposal.
Feb 2011	Brisbane – Change to reciprocal runway operations (RRO) to start earlier than 10pm, when possible, meaning arriving and departing air traffic will be over the water rather than over residential areas as much as possible	The change has been implemented and Airservices' internal documentation updated. Awaiting formal change of the public pilot documentation - departure and approach procedures (DAP). Most recent advice from Airservices is that this is now anticipated by 31 May 2013 (previously 31 March 2013).
Feb 2011	Canberra – Can parachute operations use the high noise corridor when possible to minimise overflying residential areas?	While documentation is in place to effect this change, it appears that recent departures are not yet enacting the new practices. The ANO has sought further advice from Airservices on progress with implementing the change.
Oct 2011	Perth – Can low trajectory aircraft fly steeper departure over the suburbs, particularly at night?	Airservices worked with South African Airways to trial a steeper climb on departure for one of their heavier long-haul departures. The trial took place in May 2012. Initial analysis of the trial provided to the ANO was inconclusive - further analysis is awaited.
Mar 2012	Perth – Can departures to the south that head west and north continue directly to the ocean before turning north?	Airservices tabled a high level overview of the proposal at the Community Aviation Consultation group meeting in February 2013. Support was given to further develop and investigate the proposal.
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 are working to define the proposal for consideration.
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.
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 not, to explain why they must climb where they do

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

Complaint received by ANO	Description of initiative	Current status
Jul 2012	Jandakot – Can full length departures be used to minimise noise impacts on residents	While this was common practice already, it has now been explicitly documented in an update to the Fly Friendly Agreement between the Airport and operators.
Jul 2012	Jandakot – Can simulated engine failure practice be conducted over Airport land rather than residential areas?	New procedures were introduced in February that deliver this improved noise outcome.
Jan 2013	Gold Coast – Can parachute aircraft climb over water rather than over residential areas?	The operator has a new twin-engined aircraft that is capable of climbing over the water, where the smaller single engine aircraft previously used could not climb over water for safety reasons. Where practical, the operator will now use their twin-engined aircraft and air traffic control will provide clearances so the aircraft will climb over water whenever possible.

## 4 Consultation

- 4.1 During the quarter, the Ombudsman (or his representative) attended a number of airport consultative meetings and other industry forums. 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”*. These meetings also provide useful insights into broader community concerns and the factors affecting how aircraft operate in the area.
- 4.2 ANO attendance at such meetings will continue throughout 2013. While the key output is feedback to Airservices, the ANO is also liaising with the chairs of consultative forums and with airports to improve the effectiveness of these forums.

## 5 Information Provision

- 5.1 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. All of the recommendations made in the Perth Review have now been closed. Six of the nine recommendations made in the Sydney Review have been actioned and work is underway on addressing the remaining three.

- 5.2 The summary at **Attachment 2** includes the ANO assessment of the recommendations from all three public reports issued to date, including a brief summary of the actions completed since the last quarterly report on recommendations that have been closed during the quarter.
- 5.3 As with the other two major reviews, the ANO office will be publishing a 'one year on' assessment of Airservices' response to the Sydney Review. This will be available publicly, once the Board has had the opportunity to consider it.

## 6 Conclusions

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6.1 Airservices has continued to action the review recommendations during the quarter as reflected in the table below.

**Table 3: Summary of ANO public report recommendation status**

Recommendation status:	Complaint Handling	Perth	Sydney	Total
Actioned	18	7	6	<b>27</b>
Action is underway	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>

- 6.2 In addition, Airservices is continuing to reform its processes for managing aircraft noise issues. In particular there is an increasing focus on using complaints and other inputs to identify better noise outcomes, and then to bring about changes to achieve these improvements.
- 6.3 We have been pleased that some changes have been implemented during the quarter that deliver improved noise outcomes for some areas, and will continue to pursue (and report progress on) potential opportunities, as listed above. We will also continue our focus in improving the quality of aircraft noise information provided to the public (both through complaint handling and through published materials) as this is a key to better management of aircraft noise generally.



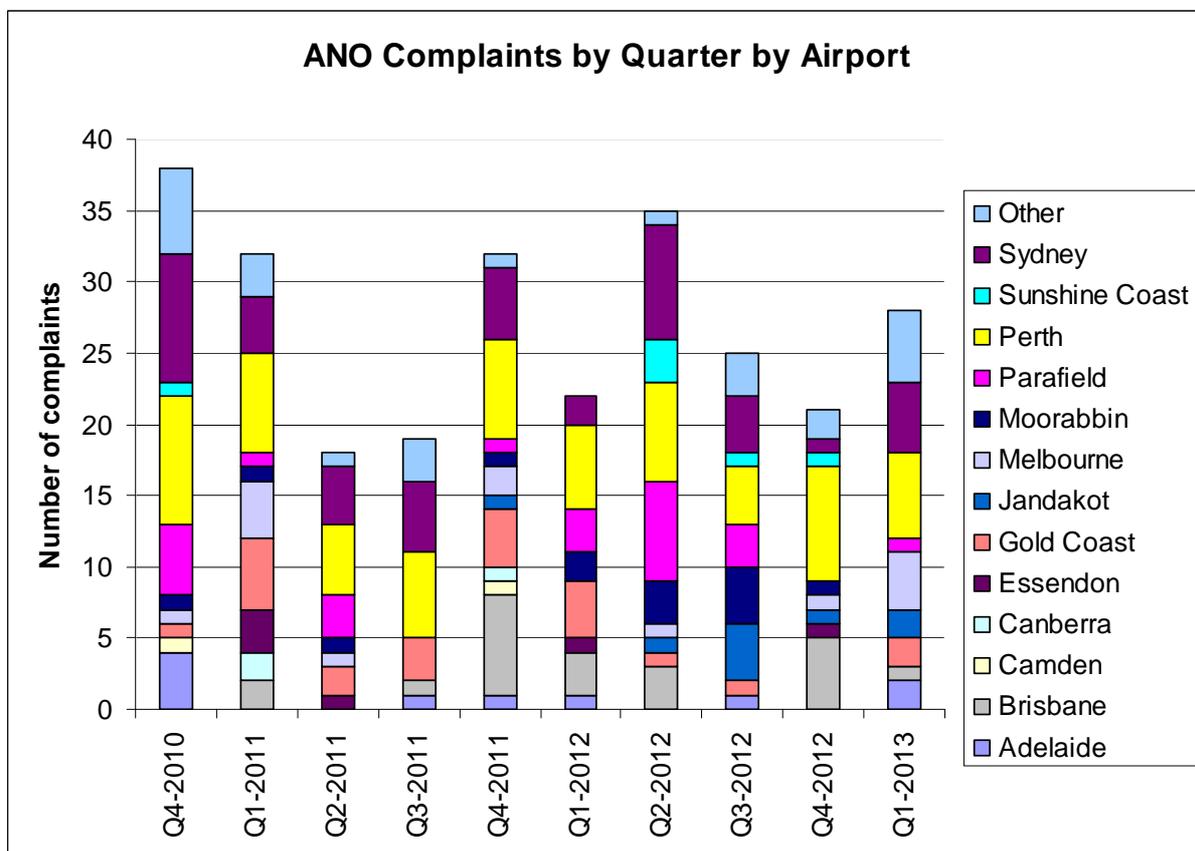
Ron Brent  
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman  
4 April 2013

## Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics for the quarter.

	Jan 2013	Feb 2013	Mar 2013	Total for period	Total from 1-Sep-10 to 31-Mar-13
Complaints received:	7	10	11	28	283
Complaints closed:	6	11	8	25	256
Complaints not reviewed:					62
Complainant did not provide further information					13
Outside charter scope					17
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					32
Complaints reviewed:					194
No change possible - explanation provided					163
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					5
Change adopted by Airport operator					21
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					5
Average time taken to close complaints: (including weekends and public holidays)					57 days

The following graph shows complaints received about airports by quarter.



## 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, Airservices has:

- Implemented their new complaints management database, which has closed the final recommendation of the Complaints Handling Review. Monitoring of the ongoing implementation of Complaints Handling Recommendations 1, 15, 17 and 18 will now form part of normal business and these recommendations have consequently been closed.
- Addressed the last three Perth Review Recommendations (1, 4, and 7) through providing enhanced community engagement and information at the Perth community and noise consultation forums, establishing a strategic noise improvement plan and progressing two specific investigations to deliver improved noise outcomes in Perth, and through the continued updating of their reports, fact sheets and website information.
- Addressed further Sydney Review recommendations (4 and 6) through the publication of the new format Aircraft Noise Information Report and updated fact sheets and website information.

As the ANO is no longer monitoring implementation for the recommendations detailed above, they have been excluded from the following table.

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 is underway.</p>
<p><b>Sydney Issues Recommendation 3:</b></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><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>