



# Quarterly Report

## July – September 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 July to September 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

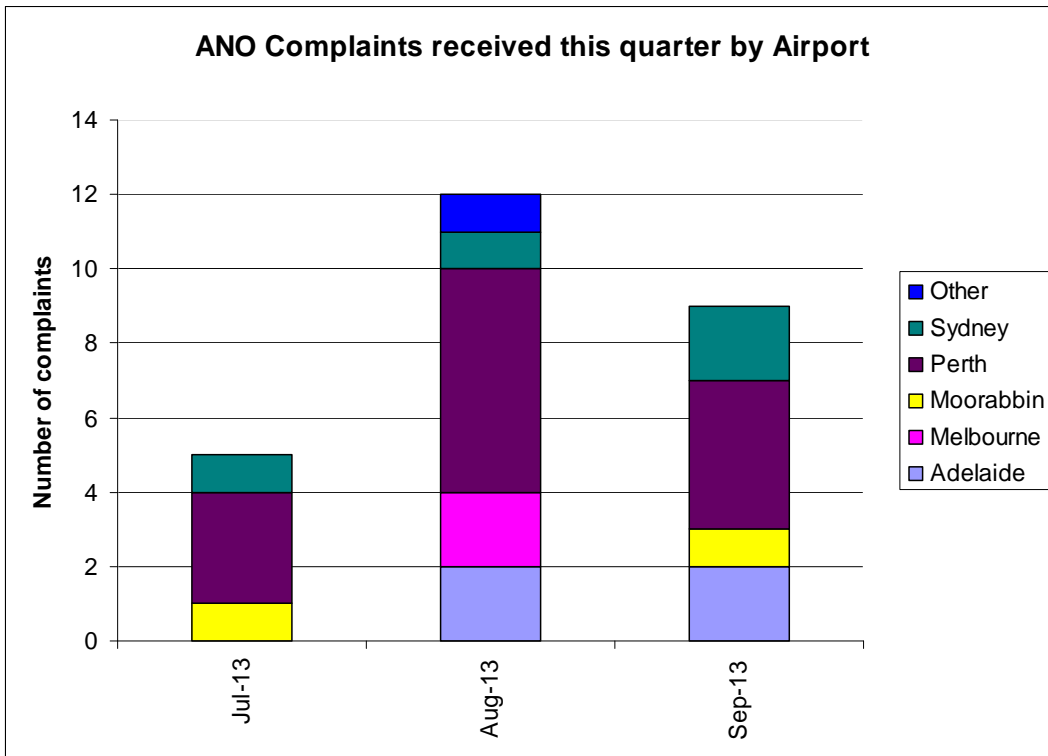
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- 2.1 A key achievement in the past quarter has been the finalisation of our longest-standing case. The result has been implementation of a trial flight path change that relocates part of an arrival route that overflew the suburb of Roleystone in Perth, Western Australia, to overfly less populated areas further east. The case study on page 3 provides more detail on the case history and outcomes.
- 2.2 During the quarter we also finalised the draft report of our *Case Studies in Complaint Management*, which has been provided to Airservices for technical review and any comments in response to the findings. Following Airservices' response, the report will be finalised and submitted to the Board for consideration, and then published on our website in due course.
- 2.3 Complaints to our office have returned to the average trend levels after an unexplained drop last quarter. ANO staff have also been busy attending a number of events, conferences and meetings throughout the quarter. Additionally, our new complaints management system is now operational and providing an efficient tool for complaint management.

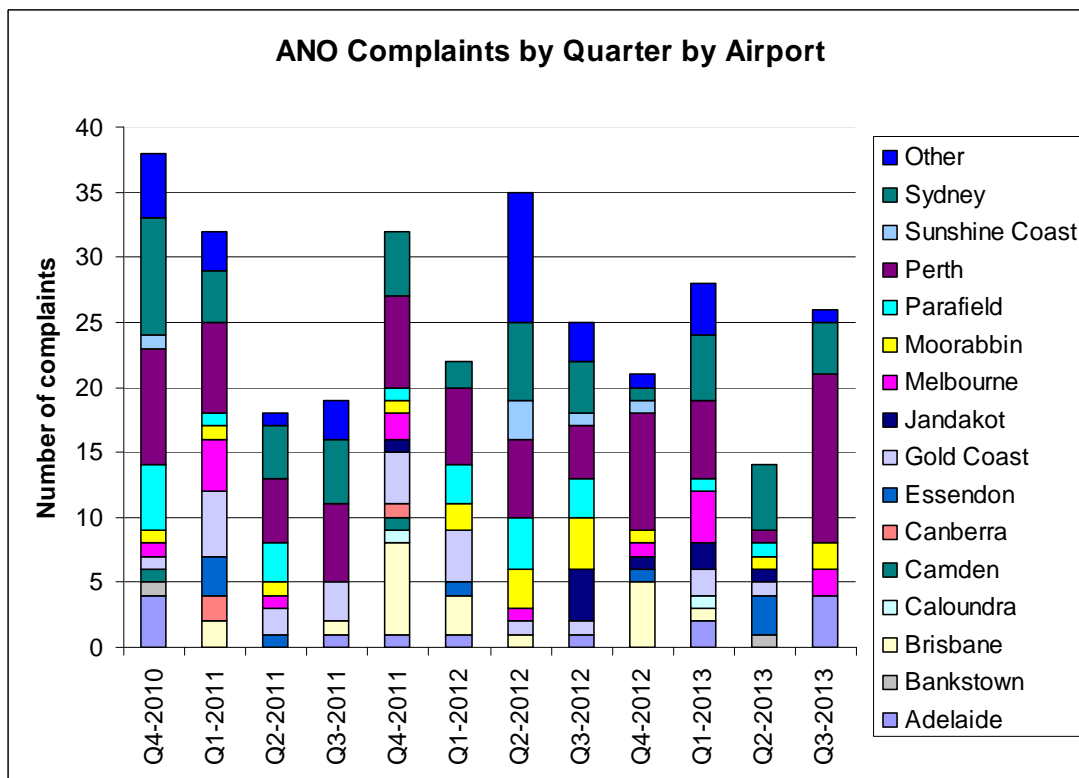
## 3 Complaint handling

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- 3.1 In the quarter, the ANO received 26 new individual complaints, which is in line with the long term average and does not continue the marked fall in complaint numbers experienced last quarter.
- 3.2 This quarter's complaints bring the total number of complaints received to an overall total of 323 since we commenced operations in September 2010. Of the total, 302 are closed. More detailed complaint statistics to the end of September 2013 are included at **Attachment 1**.
- 3.3 Interestingly, the complaints this quarter related to just five Airports (the complaint categorised 'other' was registered without identifying an address or airport of concern).



3.4 This has not been the trend in past quarters when complaints have related to eight or more airports, with the exception of quarter 3 of 2011, which had just six airports of concern, although not the same airports as quarter 3 of 2013.



## Seeking noise improvement opportunities

- 3.5 One of the core focuses of our investigations into complaints is to look for the potential to improve noise outcomes. As mentioned above a key achievement this quarter has been implementation of a change process that has the potential to improve the noise outcomes for a number of residents of Perth (see case study below).

### **C** Why can't the planes fly over there?

**A** In November 2010 the ANO received a complaint from a resident of the Perth suburb of Roleystone. She identified the frustrations she had experienced dealing with Airservices, since air route changes introduced in late 2008 had seen a new flight path directly over her suburb. Key to her frustration was that no-one had adequately explained why the planes had to fly this route, rather than a few kilometres further east over less populated areas.

**S** The ANO sought an explanation from Airservices and was advised that there was no technical reason it couldn't be moved. Airservices identified that operational considerations would need to be investigated, and an environmental assessment would potentially be required. At the time Airservices did not have effective processes in place for considering changes that were not motivated by safety or operational factors. Unfortunately this meant that the consideration phase was long and somewhat inefficient, but the ANO continued to press Airservices for progress.

**T** The outcome reached is commendable. In August 2013 a trial commenced with a new segment of the instrument arrival path, relocating the flights from over Roleystone and surrounds to overfly less populated areas to the east. Airservices has been responsive to feedback about their consultation processes in the lead-up to the trial and has addressed concerns from residents directly and through updated public information.

**D** The trial will run for a year before Airservices will determine whether or not to implement the change permanently. More information is available at:

<http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/projects/trial-of-new-flight-path-roleystone-wa>

**Y** Not only does the trial deliver improved noise outcomes for residents of Roleystone, but the process of resolving this complaint has led to a number of key improvements in Airservices:

- new processes for considering change proposals that are initiated to improve noise outcomes - this will help future noise improvement opportunities to be progressed through consideration and implementation in a more timely fashion
- lessons learned about consultation and information presentation that can be adopted for such changes in the future
- recognition of the benefits of identifying and pursuing noise improvement opportunities
- acknowledgment of the value of complaints to improving business performance

3.6 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 below 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
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 ANO awaits Airservices' advice on the level of compliance with the new arrangements, due Oct 2013.
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 aim 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. Airservices advised that they will undertake an investigation of whether there are any feasible tracks for ATC that will provide a noise improvement by the end of Sep 2013 and provide a report to the ANO after that.

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

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. The ANO is very pleased to see this long-standing case finalised with a change to improve noise for many Perth residents. See Case Study included in this report.
Jun 2013	Melbourne – Can changes be made to reduce the impacts of helicopters hovering at low levels during noise sensitive times?	Following several complaints to the ANO about this issue, Airservices investigated if any changes could be made. Operators have implemented changes that should see an improvement in the noise outcome.

## 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 The ANO actively monitored and participated in Airservices' consultation associated with the introduction of the modified flight path trial at Roleystone. We met with Airservices representatives after this to reflect on the lessons learned that could be adopted in future consultation activities. These related mainly to the presentation of public information to clearly define the anticipated extent of change from a resident's perspective.

## 5 Information Provision

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- 5.1 While Airservices continues to make progress in this area, the ANO maintains an active role in monitoring the material Airservices makes available and, where appropriate, provides feedback. This includes identifying out-of-date or inaccurate material on the website and in fact sheets, which Airservices has been responsive to amending.
- 5.2 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*.
- 5.3 **Attachment 2** lists the three ongoing recommendations from our *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Information (Sydney)* review. All other recommendations have now been actioned.

## 6 Conclusions

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- 6.1 In closing I would like to commend Airservices on continuing to reform the way they manage aircraft noise issues. I was pleased to receive and pass on to Airservices some positive unsolicited feedback, which reinforces not only that change is occurring, but that the more open approach is clearly appreciated by members of the public:
- "I think Airservices ought to be congratulated on the transformation in their culture. They clearly demonstrate a better understanding and commitment to being transparent and accountable."*
- 6.2 We look forward to releasing the report on our current review and to the continuing improvement in Airservices' management of aircraft noise issues.



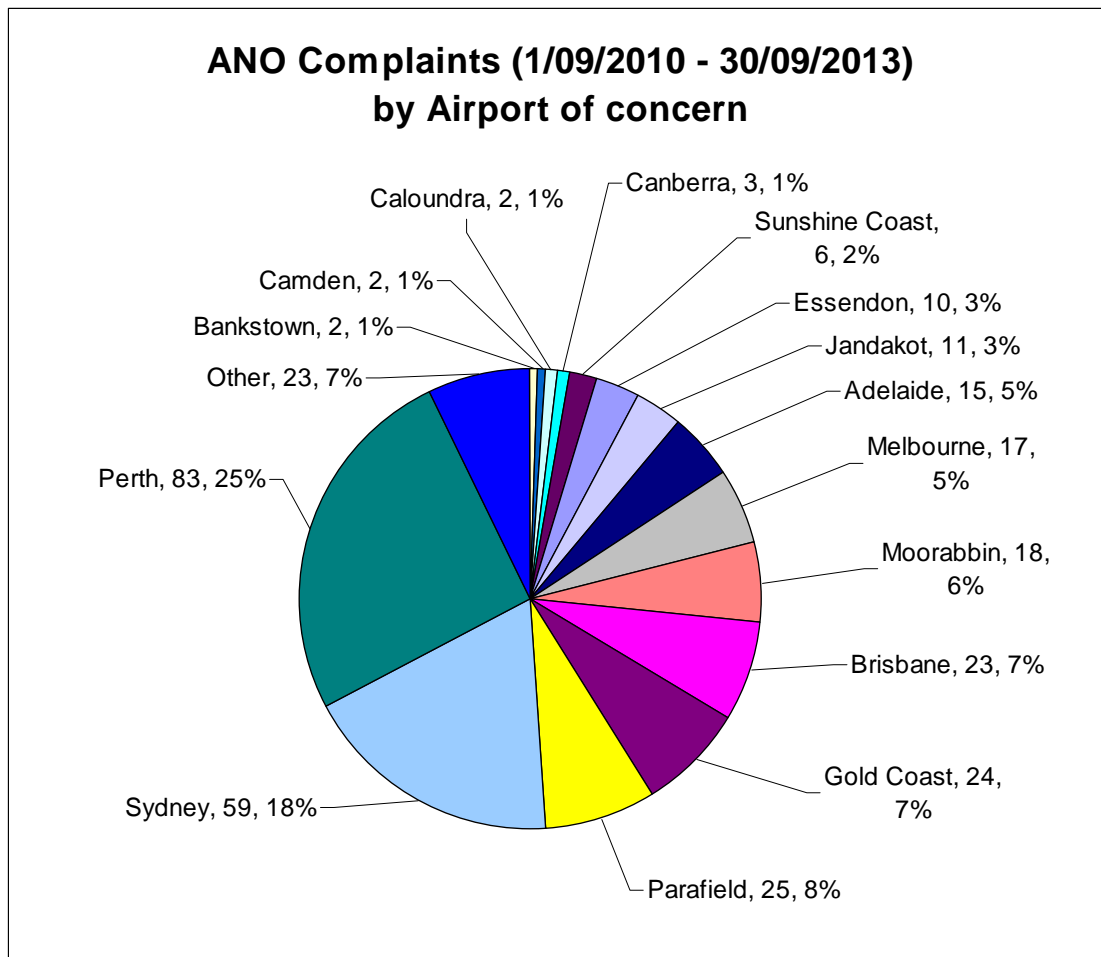
Ron Brent  
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman  
11 October 2013

## Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following table summarises the complaint statistics for the quarter.

	Jul 2013	Aug 2013	Sep 2013	Total for quarter	Total from 1 Sep 10 to 30 Sep 13
Complaints received:	5	12	9	26	323
Complaints closed:	9	10	8	27	302
Complaints closed - not reviewed:					70
Complainant did not provide further information					16
Outside charter scope					17
Referred to Airservices to respond directly					37
Complaints closed - reviewed:					232
No change possible - explanation provided					196
Change adopted by Airservices Australia					6
Change adopted by Airport operator					22
Change adopted by Aircraft operator					8
Average time taken to close complaints: (including weekends and public holidays)					62 days

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





## 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, there has been no change, with the three remaining *Assessment of Aircraft Noise Issues: Sydney (March 2012)* recommendations still ongoing.

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>