



Quarterly Report

June – August 2011

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report includes complaint statistics and a commentary on the fourth quarter of operations of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO). 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 the provision of information about aircraft noise.
- 1.2 The report starts with a short review of the first year of the ANO.

2 The year in review and looking ahead

- 2.1 After a year of operations, the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's team has become a respected and important contributor to Airservices Australia and the broader industry's processes for improving aircraft noise management in Australia.
- 2.2 Key achievements over the year include:
 - establishment of a small team and the continued development of expertise to ensure high standards of service are delivered
 - establishment of an independent office and an effective suite of administrative processes for managing the workload
 - handling over 100 individual complaints
 - delivering a major review of Airservices Australia's handling of aircraft noise complaints in February 2011, with all 18 recommendations accepted
 - stakeholder engagement through attendances at airport community aviation consultation group meetings (or equivalent) across the country, industry forums, and meetings with community groups and individual complainants
 - improvements to noise outcomes through the resolution of complaints and through direct involvement with airports, operators and Airservices Australia
 - contributions to Airservices Australia's change management and consultation processes
 - establishment of the government aviation complaint handlers forum with Airservices Australia, and other government aviation complaint agencies.
- 2.3 The year ahead will see a continued focus on resolution of individual complaints alongside some key initiatives, including:
 - delivery of reviews initiated this year into noise management issues in Fingal Head, Perth, and Sydney
 - assisting Airservices Australia with implementation of the *Complaint Handling Review* recommendations
 - enhancement of the ANO website as an aircraft noise information resource

- development and delivery of training in complaints and feedback for senior managers in Airservices Australia
- review of Airservices Australia's evolving consultation arrangements
- exploring opportunities to improve information available for buyers of properties affected by aircraft noise
- development of better practice guidance material and training resources to assist Airservices Australia in discharging their aircraft noise management accountabilities
- improving processes in Airservices Australia and the ANO for handling difficult complainant behaviours.

3 Complaint handling

- 3.1 In the June to August 2011 quarter, the ANO received 16 new individual complaints (compared with 37, 30, and 31 in the first three quarters of ANO operations). This brings the total number of complaints received to the end of August 2011 to 114. Of these, 102 were closed as at the end of August.
- 3.2 **Attachment 1** provides a more detailed summary of the ANO's complaint statistics.
- 3.3 Work on the targeted reviews to consider systemic issues arising from Sydney, Perth, and Fingal Head (Gold Coast) has continued this quarter. The Fingal Head report will be published in September 2011 and the Perth report is progressing towards public release before Christmas.

Implementation of Review of Complaints Handling - Airservices Australia February 2011

- 3.4 Airservices Australia has advised that one recommendation (*Recommendation 3: Airservices should make a senior manager accountable for capturing, recording and tracking through to implementation, noise improvement opportunities arising from complaints*) has been implemented, with the General Manager Environment now explicitly assigned this accountability. A further six recommendations are scheduled for completion by the end of September and all but one recommendation are scheduled for completion by the end of the calendar year. Recommendation 16 (*Airservices should give priority to the replacement of the NEU complaints database with a system capable of providing more sophisticated analysis of complaint data*) is scheduled for completion in 2012.
- 3.5 The proposed timeline is noted.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 In August, the ANO office reviewed the draft update to Airservices Australia's *Consultation and Communications Protocol* and provided input. The timeline for release of the updated version is not yet set.
- 4.2 Additionally, consultation processes are being addressed as part of the systemic issues review for Perth, which is currently being progressed.
- 4.3 During the quarter, the Ombudsman (or his representative) attended consultative forums for four airports, met with the management of two other airports, attended two industry forums, and met with one community representative organisation.

5 Information Provision

- 5.1 The presentation and distribution of information about aircraft noise is the third function of the ANO charter and one that is intrinsically related to the effectiveness of both complaint handling and consultation processes.
- 5.2 It is a key focus in the *Review of Aircraft Noise Information Presentation and Complaint Resolution: Perth*, the Terms of Reference for which were released in early August 2011 and are available on the ANO website.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The fourth quarter of ANO operations has seen a concentrated effort on the Perth review, definition of the investigations to be undertaken into issues at Sydney and finalisation of the Fingal Head report. Alongside this, the office has continued the day-to-day management of individual complaints received, met with Airservices Australia about their implementation of the *Complaint Handling Review* recommendations, and continued to engage with stakeholders.



Ron Brent
Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
13 September 2011

Attachment 1 Summary of complaint statistics

	Jun-11	Jul-11	Aug-11	Fourth Quarter Total	Totals 1-Sep-10 to 31-Aug-11
Number of complaints received:	3	4	9	16	114
ACT	0	0	0	0	1
NSW	2	2	4	8	42
NT	0	0	0	0	0
QLD	0	1	0	1	6
SA	0	0	0	0	15
TAS	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	1	0	0	1	19
WA	0	1	5	6	31
Total closed:	10	6	6	22	102
Complaints not reviewed:	2	0	2	4	14
Complainant did not provide further info	0	0	2	2	9
Outside charter scope	2	0	0	2	5
Addressed in separate review	2	3	0	5	39
Outcome of reviewed complaints:	6	3	4	13	49
Referred to Airservices to respond directly	2	1	1	4	11
Referred to Air Force to respond directly	0	0	0	0	1
Referred to Airport operator to respond dir.	0	0	0	0	1
No change possible - explanation provided	4	0	3	7	31
Change adopted by Airservices Australia	0	1	0	1	2
Change adopted by Airport operator	0	1	0	1	2
Change adopted by Operators	0	0	0	0	1
Time taken to close complaints: average days, including weekends and public holidays, from lodgement to close:	62				