



Quarterly Report

January-March 2022

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1 Overview

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) carried forward 10 complaints on 1 January 2022. During this quarter (January-March 2022), the ANO received 162 new complaints, closed 139 complaints, and therefore carries forward 33 complaints to April 2022. Of the open cases carried forward to April 2022, 26 were received in late March 2022, with one complaint carried over from December 2021 and the remaining 5 received in February- March 2022.

During this quarter, the ANO has seen an increase in complaints across a variety of airports, reflecting the increase in aircraft operations across Australia. However, the bulk of complaints received continued to relate to Brisbane Airport. Throughout the quarter, 120 complaints related to the new flight paths at Brisbane Airport were received. While the majority of Brisbane Airport cases related to the impacts of the new runway, a small number were received from individuals under flight paths for the existing runway.

The ANO continued to monitor Airservices Australia's (Airservices') community engagement processes in line with clause 71 of the ANO Charter, including in relation to the Post Implementation Review (PIR) process for the flight paths associated with the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane airports. Regular monthly meetings have been ongoing between the ANO senior advisors and Airservices senior community engagement staff. The ANO will also continue to review and suggest improvements to the NCIS' existing complaint handling processes and welcomed the commencement of a NCIS Line Leader.

In this quarter, the ANO received three Defence complaints and closed two of these cases. One Defence case remained open at the end of the quarter as the ANO was awaiting a response from Defence before it could commence its review. As of 1 April 2022, there are no outstanding Defence recommendations.

The ANO website has been upgraded during the quarter, to improve its presentation and readability. Additional work to improve the website content is ongoing.

The ANO office also said goodbye to Senior Advisor, Bradley Currie, who's time with the ANO was short but his contribution during a particularly busy period was highly valued. The ANO office welcomed its new Senior Advisor, Stefan Smerdon, to the team in late March.

2 Complaint handling

2.1 Complaints managed in quarter

During the quarter, the ANO received 162 complaints - 151 relating to Airservices, 3 related to Defence. A further 8 complaints were received that had no agency identified due to either insufficient information provided by complainants, or the complaint related to an agency other than Airservices or Defence¹. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show the number of complaints received by agency and that while the number of complaints received has reduced compared to the January-March 2021 quarter, the complaints received have increased compared to the previous quarters.

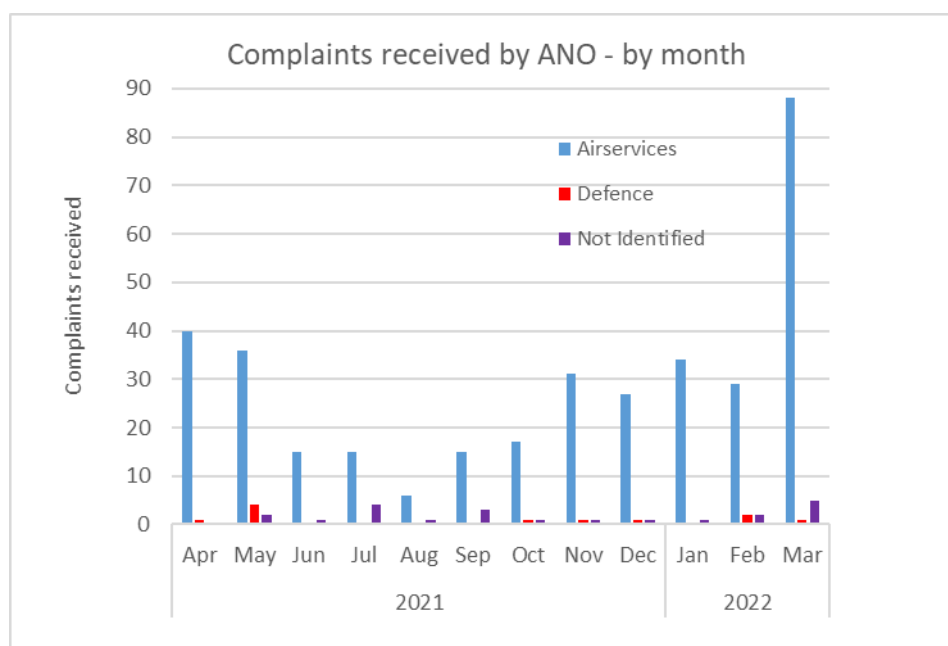


Figure 1 – Complaints received by ANO by month, April 2021 - March 2022

¹ Under the ANO Charter, the ANO can review the handling of complaints or enquiries made to Airservices or Defence about aircraft noise. Where complaints are received about other agencies which sit outside of the ANO Charter, the ANO redirects complainants to the responsible agency.

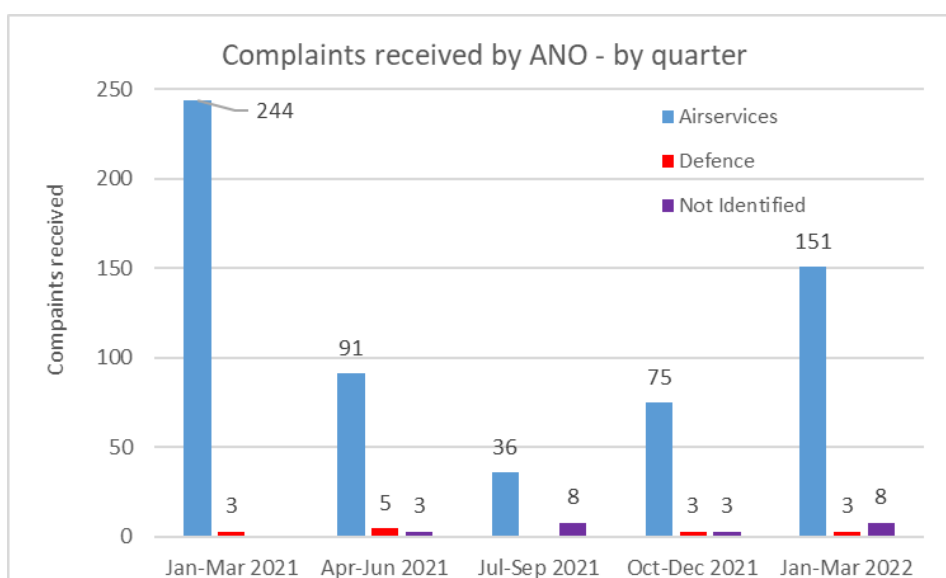


Figure 2 – Complaints received by ANO by quarter, January 2021 – March 2022

Figure 3 below charts the average number of complaints over the past 3 years. Complaints made during this quarter were higher than the 3-year average, with this being the third busiest quarter by complaints received for the ANO over the past 3 years. Only April-June 2019, which coincided with the proposed Sunshine Coast Airport flightpath changes, and January-March 2021, which coincided with the new Brisbane Airport runway opening, were busier.

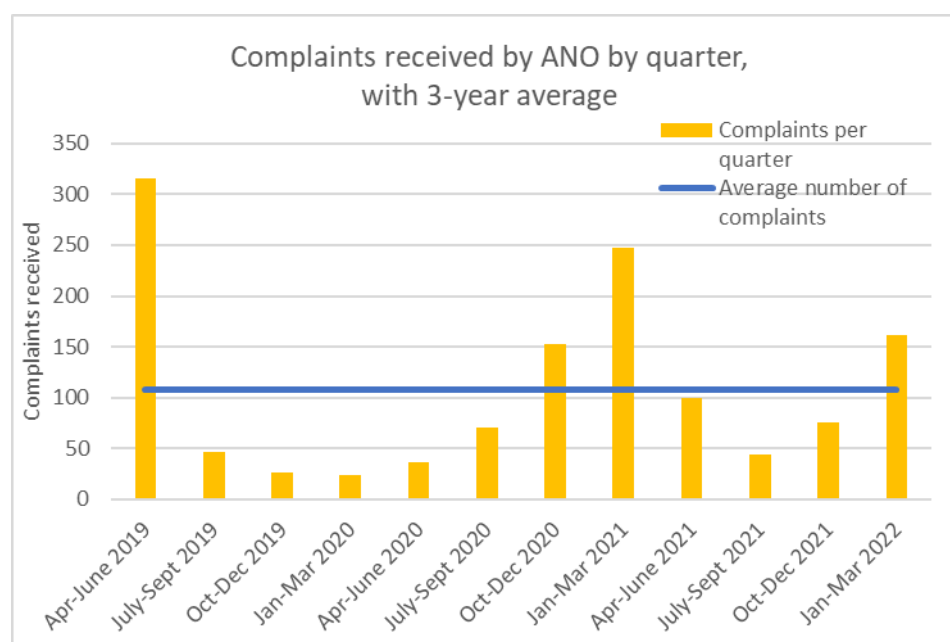


Figure 3 – Complaints received by ANO by quarter, with 3-year average for complaint trends.

The majority of complaints received from January – March 2022 continue to be attributed to the opening of the new runway for Brisbane, with 120 complaints relating to Brisbane Airport (Figure 4). The large majority of complaints from Brisbane were generated by inclusion of the ANO on a mailing list published by a community group suggesting people voice their dissatisfaction about the impact of the new runway to numerous parties. Eight complaints received by the ANO office during this period were unrelated to Defence or Airservices, and as a result sat outside the office's remit.

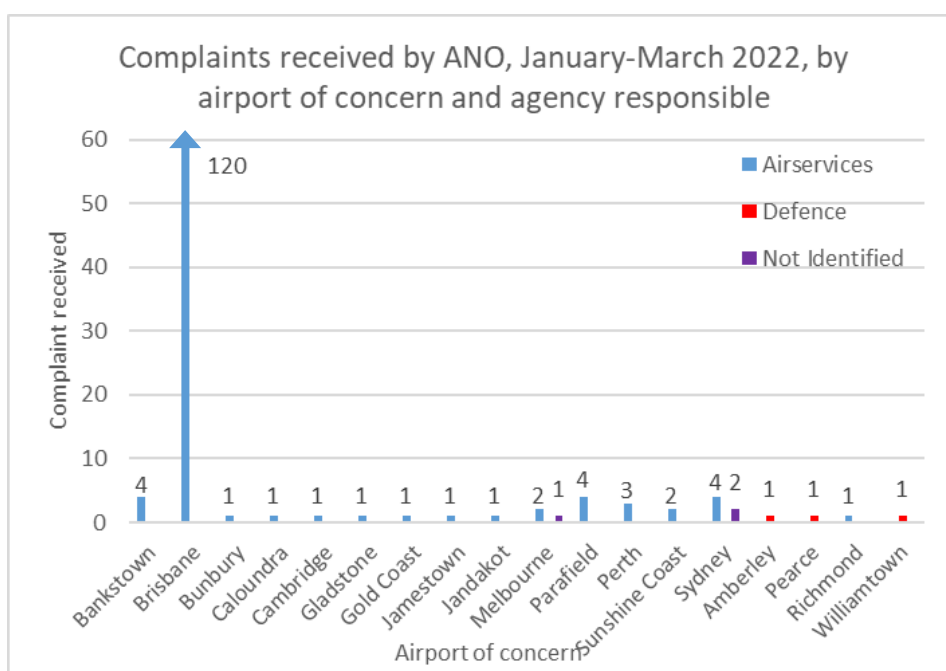


Figure 4 - Complaints received by ANO by Airport of concern, January – March 2022.

Unidentified airports

In addition to the airport specific complaints above (Figure 4), a further 9 complaints related to unidentified airports. This included complaints related to helicopter operations and where the complainant either did not identify their location or it was unclear which airport aircraft operations related to.

Closed cases

The ANO closed 139 cases for the quarter, 129 relating to Airservices, 2 relating to Defence and 8 without an agency identified.

Of the outcomes possible for the 129 cases relating to Airservices, 114 were closed as the complainants had either not yet complained to, or finalised their complaint with, Airservices. Of the 114, 97 were related to Brisbane's new runway, and related to the Airservices' post-implementation review or ongoing trials. Ten resulted in no change possible; and 2 resulted in a change being adopted by Airservices. One complaint was outside of the ANO's Charter. The remaining 2 cases were closed due to the complainant not providing additional information to the ANO to enable an investigation to progress.

Of the outcomes possible in relation to the 2 Defence cases closed this quarter, one complaint was referred to Defence to respond to directly and the remaining case was outside of the ANO's Charter.

As of 1 April 2022, 33 complaints remain open. The majority of these complaints were received in late March 2022, with the oldest of these cases open from December 2021.

Full complaint data for the quarter is presented in Attachment 1.

2.2 Issues raised in complaints

The ANO captures and reports on issues raised by complaints during the quarter. It is expected that the number of issues raised per quarter will be greater than the number of complaints, as complainants normally raise a number of issues per complaint.²

Complaints received during this quarter are classified by the ANO office under one of three themes - Agency-specific issues (which are set out in more detail below), aircraft noise issues and other issues outside of the remit of the ANO. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the issues raised during the quarter. As would be expected, the most common issue raised with the ANO office are aircraft noise related concerns.

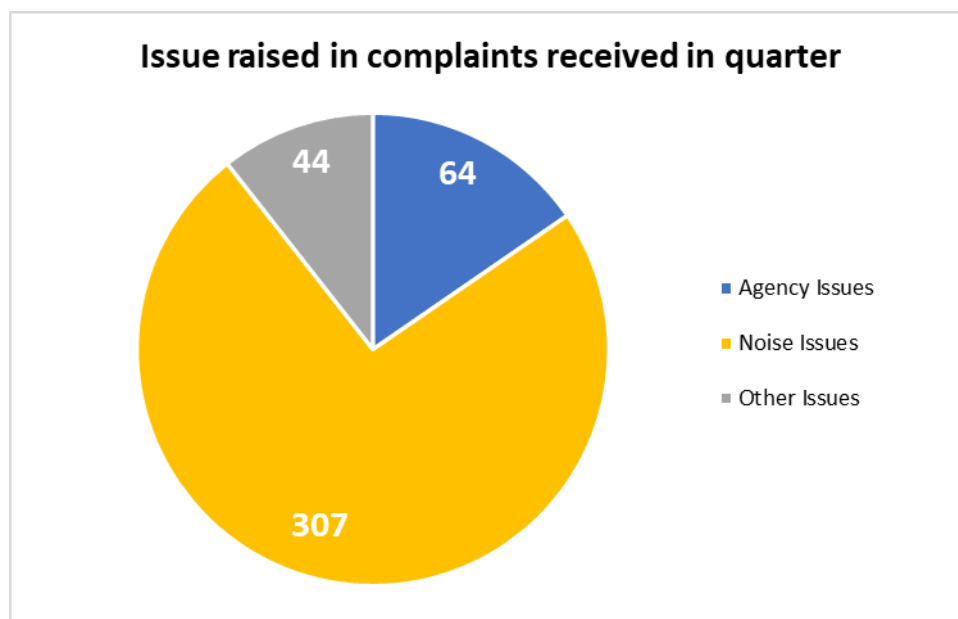


Figure 5 – Issues raised in complaints received by the ANO, January 2022-March 2022

As shown in Figure 6, complaints about Airservices management of complaints included 24 about its community engagement. It is anticipated that complaints about community engagement will increase as Airservices develops its practice in this area. In this quarter, these concerns related predominantly to a combination of concerns about activities prior to the opening of the new Brisbane Runway.

During the quarter, the ANO office also received 16 complaints related to other complaint management issues including accessibility issues when seeking to make complaints. Additionally, a number of complaints concerned Airservices counting complaints by complainant rather than the number of complaints – this matter is discussed in detail under Section 2.6.

² For each complaint, the ANO office identified the main issues raised in the complaint. This will generally be an average of three issues per complaint.

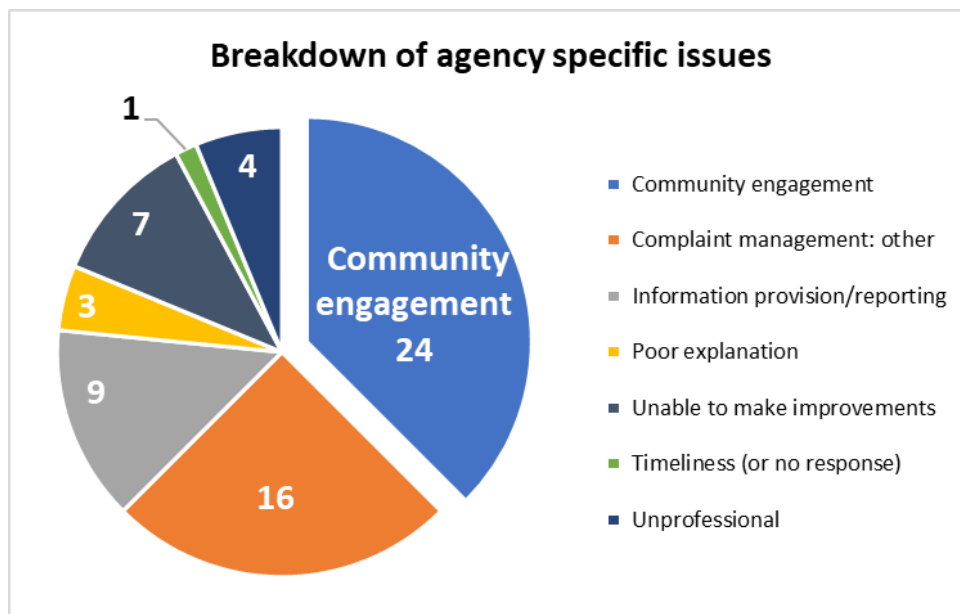


Figure 6 – Agency specific issues raised in complaints received by the ANO, January 2022-March 2022

Figure 7 breaks down noise complaints by the most common issues raised. Flight path changes and their impacts on health continue to be dominant issues. Health concerns, which include impacts upon sleep, mental health and stress, have been dominant themes during the quarter.

Additionally, under other aircraft noise issues, 17 complaints received have raised issues with the current and/or upcoming trials being undertaken at Brisbane Airport. The issues raised included dissatisfaction with the scope of the trials, lack of compliance by Air Traffic Control (ATC) or pilots with active trials, or dissatisfaction with the impact of the trials.

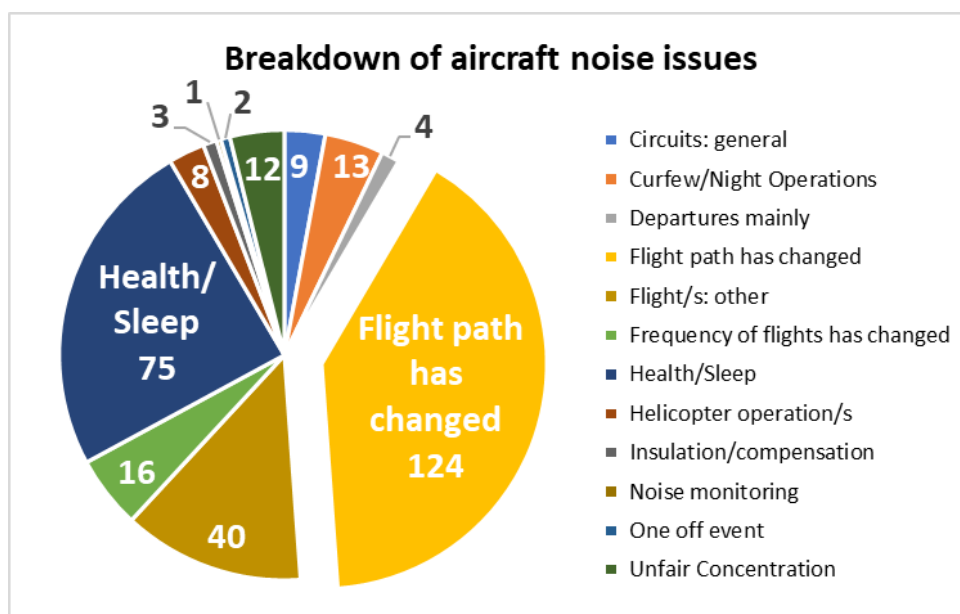


Figure 7 – Aircraft noise related issues raised in complaints received by the ANO, January 2022-March 2022

Figure 8 below shows other issues raised by complainants that were outside the remit of the ANO. The majority of other issues raised related to requests for greater regulation, or dissatisfaction with existing aviation regulation.

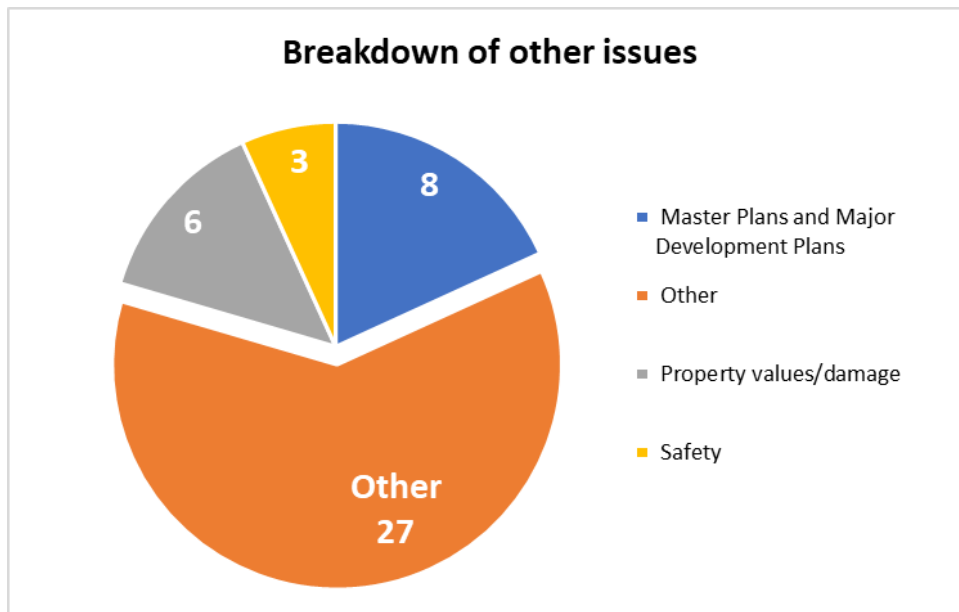


Figure 8 – Issues outside of the ANO’s jurisdiction, raised in complaints received by the ANO, January 2022-March 2022

2.3 Brisbane investigation

The ANO report on the multi-complaint review into Airservices’ community engagement practices for the Brisbane Airport new flight paths, made 4 recommendations for the Airservices’ Board to consider. Airservices’ Board accepted all 4 recommendations of the ANO with [the ANO report and Airservices’ Board response](#) published on 12 October 2021.

Airservices have provided an update on all 4 recommendations, with the implementation of all 4 recommendations ongoing. Of particular note during this quarter, was the release of the [interim report](#) from the independent reviewer, Trax International. The ANO will continue to monitor Airservices’ implementation of opportunities identified in the Trax International interim report, in relation to the ANO’s recommendations 1 and 2.

A summary of the progress in implementing the recommendations is provided in Attachment 2.

2.4 East Melbourne investigation

The ANO *Investigation into complaints about flight paths over East Melbourne* report included 3 recommendations by the ANO, which were accepted by Airservices. The [ANO report and Airservices Board response](#) were published on 19 July 2021.

Based on information provided by Airservices, recommendation 1 has been deemed closed in this quarter. Airservices have provided an update on its progress against recommendation 3, that implementation of this recommendation has been placed on hold while the Melbourne Airport consultation for the proposed new runway is ongoing. A summary of the recommendations is provided in Attachment 2.

2.5 Gold Coast investigation

In March 2022, the ANO commenced a multiple complaints review as provided for in clause 47 of the ANO Charter. This review was instigated by a complaint raised on behalf of multiple community groups in relation to Airservices' recent "Southern Operations Noise Improvement" review and finalised report. The scope of this review will include the following in so far as they relate to aircraft noise:

- Airservices' assessment of the potential noise improvement suggestions associated with Gold Coast southern operations
- Airservices' engagement with the community throughout the process.

This review is ongoing.

2.6 Liaison with Noise Complaints Information Service (NCIS)

The ANO office and Airservices' NCIS team continue to hold quarterly meetings. With the commencement of the new NCIS Line Leader, a monthly meeting has been established between the ANO Senior Advisors and NCIS Line Leader. In addition to formal meetings, staff from the ANO office and NCIS team speak regularly to discuss matters identified through individual reviews.

In the October-December 2021 quarter, the ANO office identified areas in which frequent concerns were being raised by complainants, about the NCIS handling of complaints. The ANO continues to work with Airservices to identify opportunities to improve its complaint handling processes.

As identified in Section 2.2 and shown in Figure 6, reporting by Airservices of complainant numbers, rather than the total number of complaints made was raised multiple times to the ANO office this quarter. The ANO office raised this matter with the NCIS team during the quarter and in April 2022, Airservices' confirmed that moving forward it would report both the number of complainants and total complaint numbers.

2.7 Liaison with Defence

During this quarter, the ANO office welcomed the commencement of the new Staff Officer, Aircraft Noise Management for the Department of Defence. In addition to speaking regularly to discuss matters identified through individual reviews, the ANO office and Defence will be meeting consistently going forward.

2.8 ANO website upgrade

Over the quarter, work was completed to upgrade and modernise the ANO website appearance. These changes have been made to make the website more user friendly, including easier to navigate and read. By upgrading to more modern technology, this has also enabled the ANO website to be optimised for viewing on mobile devices.

The ANO office will be continuing to progress with further content updates in the upcoming quarters, to further improve existing content. One of the priorities of the upgrade will be

improving understanding the role of the ANO office. This is identified as priority due to the office high referral rate to Airservices and Defence. One of the key opportunities to be investigated further will be refining the ANO's presence in Search Engine results.

3 Community Engagement and Noise Information Provision

3.1 Community engagement complaint handling

In September 2021 the ANO commenced an investigation into the Airservices' complaint management systems and processes for handling complaints about community engagement and the provision of noise information. This was instigated following a complainant receiving confusing responses to the complainant due to the NCIS being unaware of separate dealings with them by the community engagement area. The investigation inquired into the capacity of Airservices to adequately manage complaints about issues other than the impact of aircraft noise, as well as those received through channels other than the NCIS team.

Airservices has since introduced a system allowing the community engagement team to properly record correspondence and actions taken on complaints about community engagement. NCIS also has access to this system minimising the potential for uncoordinated responses to complainants. A single system to manage all complaints is under investigation by Airservices.

3.2 ANO Monitoring Activities

The ANO Charter requires the ANO to monitor and report on Airservices' and Defence's community engagement processes and the presentation and distribution of aircraft noise related information.

The ANO continued to work with Airservices staff on engagement projects as they were delivered. This has included attending 2 community aviation consultation group (CACG) meetings in this quarter. At the instigation of Airservices, the ANO also met with Melbourne Airport regarding community engagement for its second runway and lessons it might take from Brisbane.

The monthly meeting between ANO senior advisors and Airservices senior community engagement staff has provided regular updates on ongoing community engagement processes and actions undertaken by Airservices. In addition, the ANO and Airservices communicated frequently during the quarter to receive point-in-time updates on specific engagement activities and to identify opportunities for complaint resolution by Airservices.

4 Key performance indicators

The ANO office introduced key performance indicators (KPIs) for its complaint handling processes in July 2021. KPI compliance levels are determined based on results throughout the applicable financial year rather than this quarter.

KPIs for complaints received by the ANO office are divided based on whether the complaint is a single complaint or part of a multi-complaint review³. Regardless of whether a complaint is part of a multi-complaint review or not, the ANO office aims to finalise all complaints within a maximum of 12 months from the date of receipt.

4.1 Acknowledgement of complaints

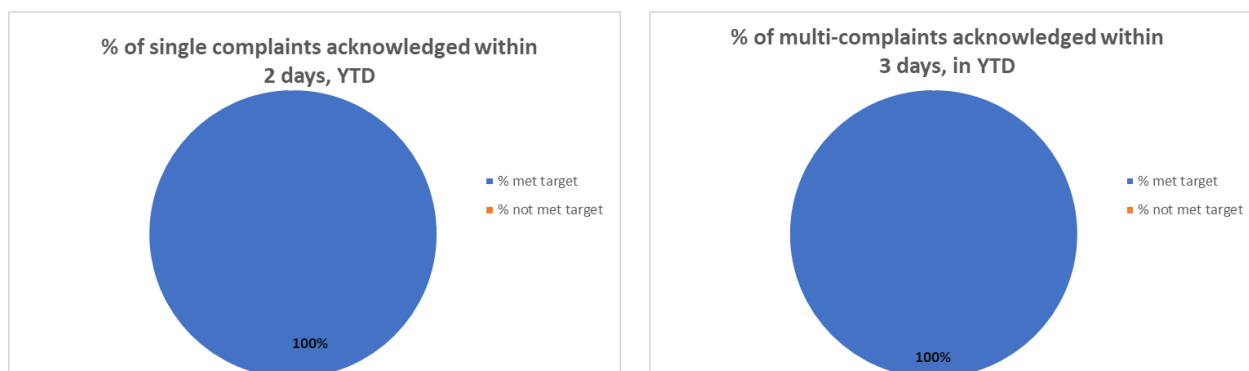


Figure 9 - % of single and multi-complaints acknowledged within target period, for year to date.

The ANO has a KPI of 2 days and 3 days to acknowledge complaints related to single complaints and multi-complaints respectively. Full compliance was achieved for this KPI, this quarter. In the July-September 2021 quarter there was one single complaint which did not meet this target. Due to the high overall compliance for the year to date (YTD) and proportion of cases impacted, the impact is below 1% and therefore Figure 9 above shows full compliance.

4.2 Determination of complaints

Once a complaint is received, the ANO has 14 days for single complaints, or 21 days for multi-complaints, to determine whether the complaint is within the scope of the ANO Charter. Full compliance was achieved for this KPI, this quarter, as shown in Figure 10. In the October-December 2021 quarter there was one single complaint which did not meet this target, however due to the high overall compliance for the year to date (YTD) and proportion of cases impacted, the data in Figure 10 shows full compliance.

³ Separate KPI's for complaints within a multi-complaint review reflect the more complex nature of multi-complaint reviews and that these reviews will generally involve the consideration of large amounts of evidence. This results in these complaints generally remaining open longer than individual cases.

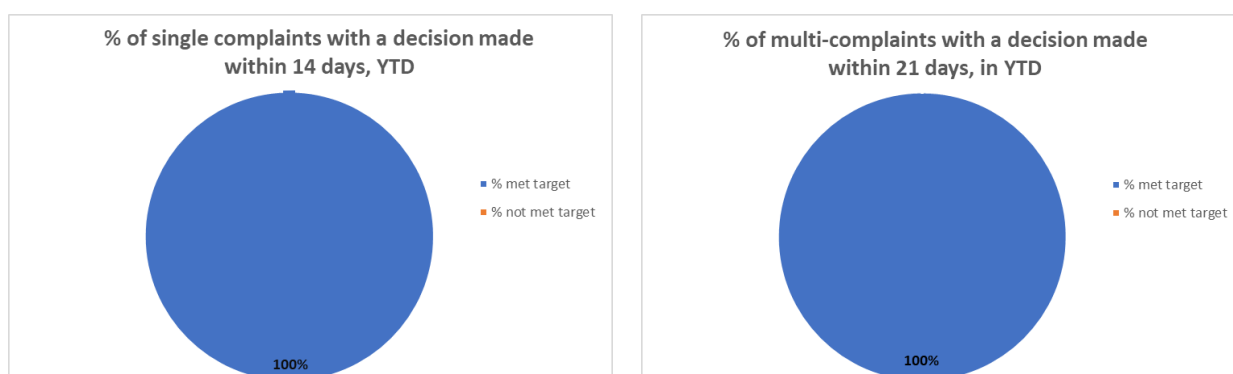


Figure 10 - % of single and multi-complaints with a decision made within target period, for year to date (right)

4.3 Progress reports to complainants

The ANO office is committed to providing regular updates on the progress to complainants during the course of an investigation⁴. In this quarter, all updates were provided in the target 28 days, however as Figure 11⁵ shows, the year to date (YTD) for both single and multi-complaints reflect occasions in the July-September 2021 quarter where this was not achieved – this was due to an unexpectedly prolonged period while Airservices formulated its response to the ANO’s report on the Brisbane investigation and reports to the complainants would have been unproductive.

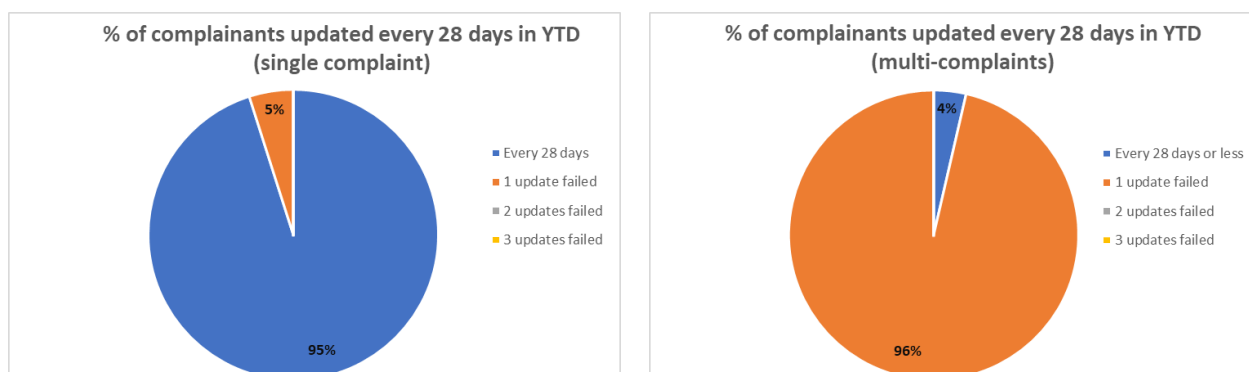


Figure 11 - % of single and multi-complainants updated within target period, for year to date.

4.4 Time taken to finalise complaints

All 139 cases closed in this quarter, as shown in Figure 12, were single complaints and all were closed within 3 months of receipt. No multi-complaint cases were closed during the quarter.

⁴ For both individual complaints and multi-complaint reviews, the KPI target is for updates to occur every 28 days or less.

⁵ Additional information has been added to this KPI graph since last quarter’s report, to reflect the number of updates failed. Each case has a maximum of 3 updates required per quarter, though a complainant may receive more frequent updates than required under the KPI targets.

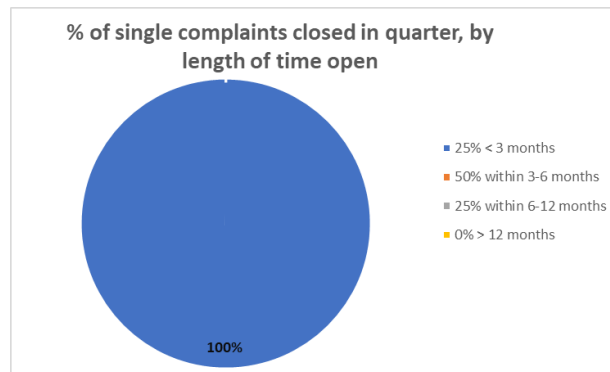


Figure 12 - % of single closed in quarter by length of time open

Closed data for the year to date, which is shown in Figure 13 reflects the low number of multi-complaints outside of the Brisbane review. Figure 13 also highlights the high closure rates of single cases within 3 months of receipt.

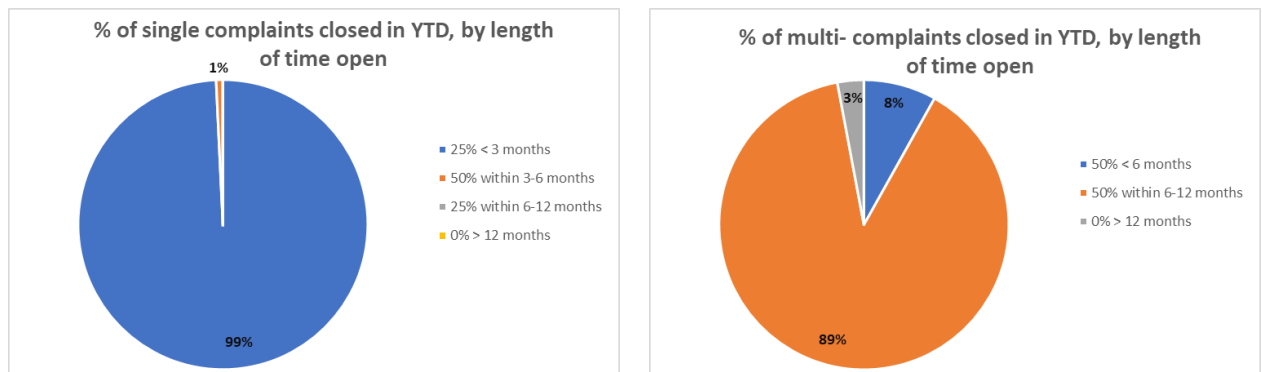


Figure 13 - % of single and multi-complaints closed in year to date, by length of time open

Full KPI performance data for the quarter are presented at Attachment 3.

Kieran Pehm

Aircraft Noise Ombudsman

3 May 2022

Attachment 1 Complaint Statistics

The following tables summarise the complaint statistics for the quarter.

AIRSERVICES	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total for quarter
Complaints received:	34	29	88	151
Complaints closed:	40	27	62	129

Total complaints closed - not reviewed:	38	22	57	117
Complainant did not provide further information	2	-	-	2
Outside charter scope	1	-	-	1
Referred to Airservices to respond directly	35	22	57	114

Total complaints closed - reviewed:	2	5	5	12
No change possible - explanation provided	1	5	4	10
Change adopted by Airservices Australia	1	-	1	2

DEFENCE	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Total for quarter
Complaints received:	-	2	1	3
Complaints closed:	-	1	1	2

Total complaints closed - not reviewed:	-	1	1	2
Complainant did not provide further information	-	-	-	0
Outside charter scope	-	-	1	1
Referred to Defence to respond directly	-	1	-	1

Total complaints closed - reviewed:	-	-	-	0
No change possible - explanation provided	-	-	-	0
Change adopted by Defence	-	-	-	0

	Airservices	Defence	No agency assigned*	Total
Complaints open at 1 January 2022 (first day of next quarter)	10	0	0	10
Complaints received	151	3	8	162
Complaints closed	129	2	8	139
Complaints open at 1 April 2022 (first day of next quarter)	32	1	1	33

*No agency assigned includes where the identified Agency is outside of the ANO's jurisdiction, or where complainants do not provide sufficient information to identify the agency.

Attachment 2 Outstanding ANO recommendations

The following tables set out the status of 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.

Airservices – Investigation into complaints about flight paths over East Melbourne (July 2021)

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
Recommendation 1 – I recommend Airservices continue its efforts to engage with the complainants to resolve their complaints including careful consideration of the alternate flight path suggested by them.	<p>On hold: Airservices advised that they continue to work with the East Melbourne Group (EMG) on the EMG's suggestion. The suggestions (3) have been assessed to determine if they are safe and flyable. Airservices have confirmed that further work around the community impacts of the suggested changes will be required.</p> <p>Due to Melbourne Airport's Major Development Plan (MDP) and Master Plan 2022 (MP) consultation (January – May 2022), Airservices have advised that this work is on hold until after that consultation activity is complete.</p>
Recommendation 3 – As part of its regular attendance at other airports' CACG meetings, or equivalents, Airservices should present the findings of this report and invite the CACGs to review the adequacy of their representation of their community membership given that the aircraft noise from "smart tracking" flight paths and sightseeing operations affects areas at considerable distances from airports.	<p>Complete: Airservices have advised that it has sent correspondence including the report findings and 3-years of complaints hotspot information to all of the Airport Community Groups / CACGs which Airservices regularly attend. This has included presentations to all but one community group, where briefing was provided to the Chair instead.</p>

Airservices – Investigation into complaints about the flight paths associated with the Brisbane Airport new parallel runway (October 2021)

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
Recommendation 1: Airservices Post Implementation Review of the Brisbane flight paths includes a community engagement process that provides reasonable opportunities for community contributions and the consideration of community suggested alternatives to the current flight paths.	<p>Ongoing: Since the last quarterly report, Trax International who are conducting an independent review of the Brisbane flight paths, have released an interim report on noise improvement opportunities identified for further investigation.</p> <p>Airservices engagement with the community is scheduled to continue through 2022. This will include discussions with the community, utilising the Trax International findings to support those discussions.</p>
Recommendation 2: Airservices review the effect of its managerial separation of flight path design, environmental assessment and community engagement, and implement a management structure that includes these functions under the same manager or demonstrate how effective	<p>Ongoing: Airservices reported to the ANO at the end of April that it did not intend to alter its management structure and of internal mechanisms that promote the integration of environmental assessment and community engagement into flight path design.</p>

<p>community engagement is incorporated into the flight path change process under the current structure.</p>	<p>The Trax interim report also identified opportunities for improvement in this area and Airservices has published an implementation approach to the opportunities identified in the Trax report.</p> <p>The ANO will assess the recently advised changes implemented by Airservices against the intent of the recommendation in the next quarterly report.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Airservices update its Third-Party Framework to ensure that Airservices' obligations regarding community engagement are properly acquitted when it enters into cooperative arrangements for community engagement with third parties.</p>	<p>Ongoing: Airservices have advised that an update of the Third-Party Framework has commenced this quarter. The ANO will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the updated Framework, prior to its finalisation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Airservices update its policies to ensure that if metrics for the assessment of significance have changed since the initial EIS assessment and approval, the originally approved designs and data should be used to produce the relevant applicable metrics, retrospectively. If the original approved data does not support production of the additional metric, for comparison against the final flight path designs, the comparative assessment should clearly explain the reasons for the alternate assessment method selected.</p>	<p>Ongoing: Airservices have advised that they have begun reviewing the policy document NOS 2.100, this quarter. The ANO looks forward to receiving a copy of this document, prior to its finalisation.</p>

Attachment 3 Key performance indicator's for ANO complaint handling

The following table summarises the performance of the ANO against the identified complaint handling KPIs for January-March 2022. KPI performance are reported both by quarter and financial year. Performance against the ANO KPIs is determined based on 12 months of data, for July-June of each financial year.

Complaint type	Key performance indicator	Benchmark	% met target (Jan Mar 2022)	% met target (2021 22 YTD)
Single complaint	Acknowledgement of complaint	Within 2 business days	100%	100%
	Decision on whether complaint is within jurisdiction within 14 business days	Within 14 business days	100%	100%
	Update to complainant on progress of complaint	Every 28 days	100%	95%
		1 update failed	0%	5%
		2 updates failed	0%	0%
		3 updates failed	0%	0%
	Time from complaint received to closed	25% < 3 months	100%	99%
		50% within 3-6 months	0%	1%
		25% within 6-12 months	0%	0%
		0% > 12 months	0%	0%
Complaints in a multi-complaint review	Acknowledgement of complaint	Within 3 business days	100%	100%
	Decision on whether complaint is within jurisdiction	Within 21 days	100%	100%
	Update to complainant on progress of complaint	Every 28 days or less	N/A	4%
		1 update failed	N/A	96%
		2 updates failed	N/A	0%
		3 updates failed	N/A	0%
	Time from complaint received to closed	50% < 6 months	N/A	8%
		50% within 6-12 months	N/A	89%
		0% > 12 months	N/A	3%