

OFFICIAL



## Quarterly Report

January-March 2025

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# 1 Overview

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The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) received a total of 3,080 complaints during the quarter, an increase from 2,551 complaints in the previous quarter. This includes 3041 non-actionable complaints, accounting for almost 99% of the complaints received, and 39 actionable complaints. Of the 3,041 non-actionable complaints, 2,947 were raised by two complainants. The ANO carried forward 14 complaints on 1 January 2025. During this quarter (January-March 2025), the ANO closed 45 actionable complaints and therefore carried forward 7 complaints to April 2025.

Of the 38 new actionable complaints, 36 related to Airservices Australia (Airservices). The ANO continued to see complaints across a variety of airports. However, the bulk of complaints continued to relate to Brisbane Airport with 12 actionable complaints and most non-actionable complaints.

In this quarter, the ANO received 2 new actionable complaints about the Department of Defence (Defence) and closed 3 complaints. One Defence complaint remained under review at the end of the quarter.

The ANO continued to monitor Airservices' community engagement processes under clause 71 of the ANO Charter. This included the implementation processes for Post Implementation Review (PIR) recommendations related to Hobart and Brisbane airports.

Regular monthly meetings between the ANO senior advisors, Airservices' senior staff in the community engagement team and the Noise Complaint and Information Service (NCIS) Manager continued. The ANO team also had quarterly meetings with Airservices' community engagement and NCIS teams.

ANO expenditure to 31 March 2025 was \$456,785, slightly higher than the ANO's average nine-monthly expenditure of \$449,621 over the past five years and below the YTD budget forecast of \$520,069.

## 2 Complaint handling

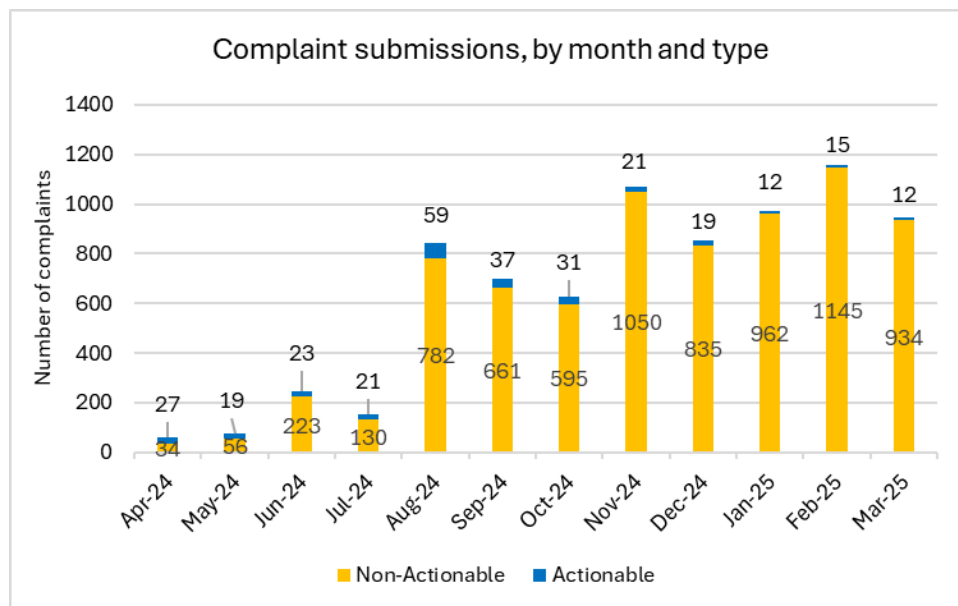
The complaints received by the ANO office can be divided into two categories: those which require action and management by the ANO office, and those that do not.

Complaints requiring action and management, referred to in this report as actionable complaints, include new complaints within the scope of the ANO Charter requiring ANO review and complaints requiring referral to another agency.

The ANO office also tracks and reports on complaints which are about aircraft noise but are not actionable under the Charter. These are referred to in this report as non-actionable complaints. The majority of these are complaints which express a grievance about aircraft noise, but are general, directed to other parties, or are complaints where the subject matter has previously been reviewed by the ANO and no further action can reasonably be taken. Section 2.1 below provides a summary of these non-actionable complaints.

### 2.1 Non-actionable complaints received in quarter

During the quarter, 3,080 complaints were raised with the ANO office – 3,041 of these were non-actionable complaints. Figure 1 shows the number of complaints raised per month over the past 12 months, including both actionable and non-actionable complaints.



**Figure 1 – Complaint submissions by month from April 2024 – March 2025, highlighting actionable and non-actionable complaints.**

During this quarter, there has been a significant increase in non-actionable complaints from 2,480 to 3,041 complaints when compared to the previous quarter. Most non-actionable complaints this quarter continued to concern the operation of the new runway for Brisbane. Of these, 2 complainants raised a total of 2,947 non-actionable complaints (98%) about operations associated with Brisbane Airport. 1 complainant raised all non-actionable complaints related to Parafield Airport.

Figure 2 below shows the breakdown of non-actionable complaints by airport, where identified.

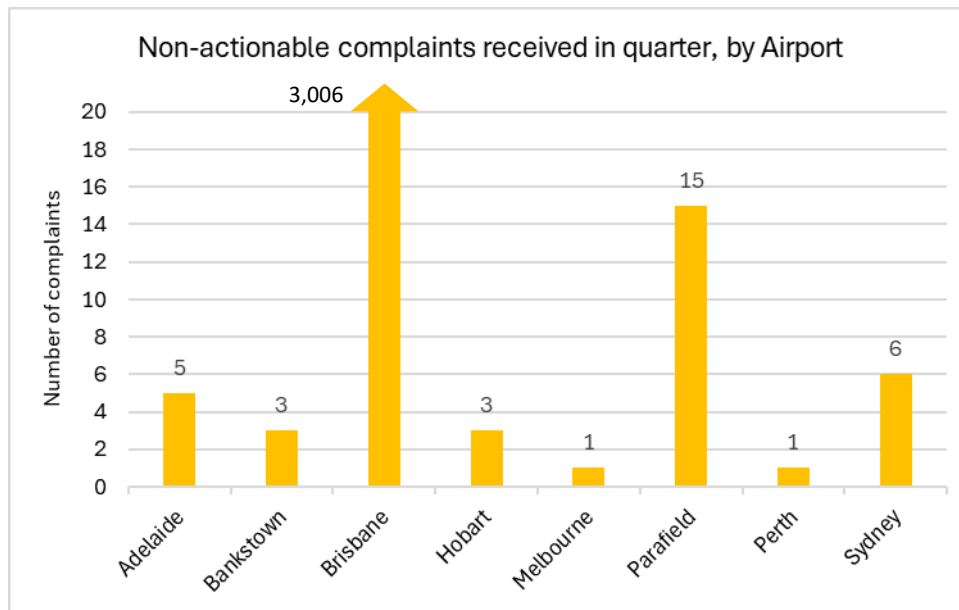


Figure 2 – Non-actionable complaints received by airport of concern, January – March 2025.

Figure 3 below shows the number of complaints made by individual complainants. One complainant submitted 78% of all the non-actionable complaints received during the quarter. This complainant sought action outside of the ANO's remit.

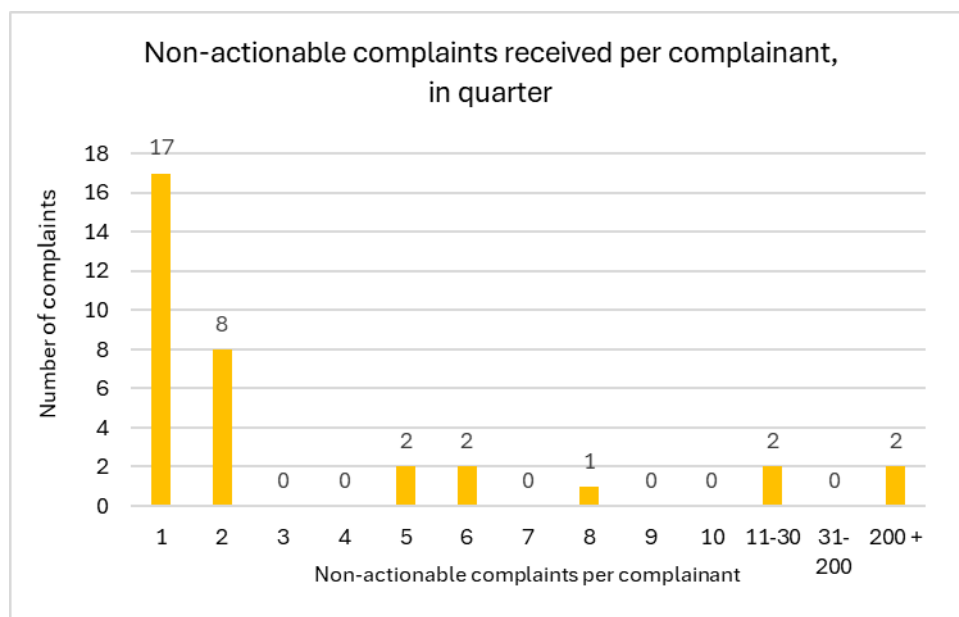


Figure 3 – Non-actionable complaints per complainant, January – March 2025.

## 2.2 Actionable complaints in quarter

During the quarter, the ANO received 38 actionable complaints - 36 relating to Airservices and 2 relating to Defence.

Figure 4 below shows the number of actionable complaints by agency. Complaints in relation to Airservices were lower compared to last quarter.

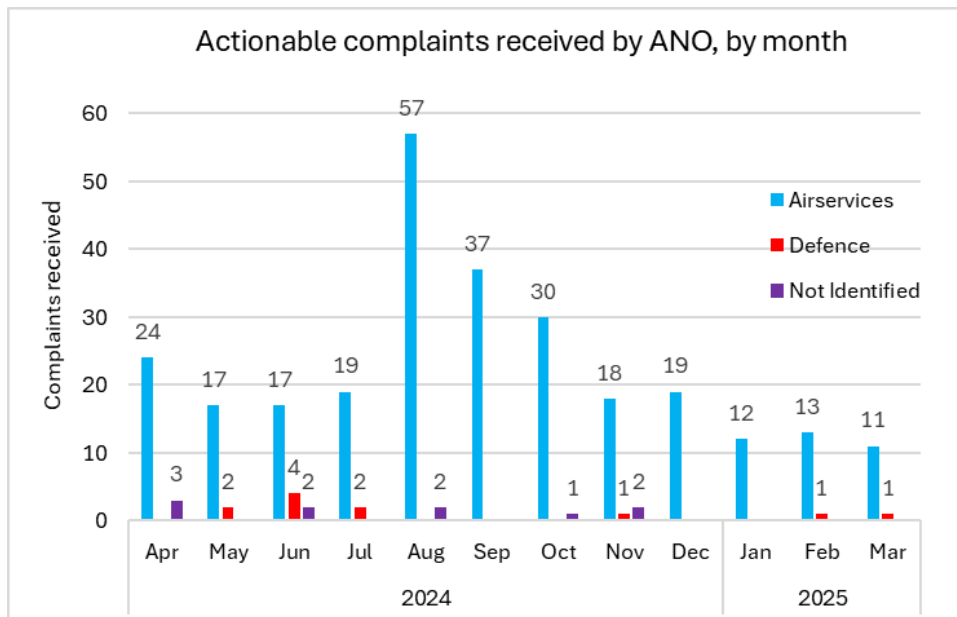


Figure 4 – Actionable complaints received by ANO by month, April 2024 – March 2025.

Figure 5 charts the average number of actionable complaints over the past 3 years. Complaints made during this quarter were lower than the 3-year average.

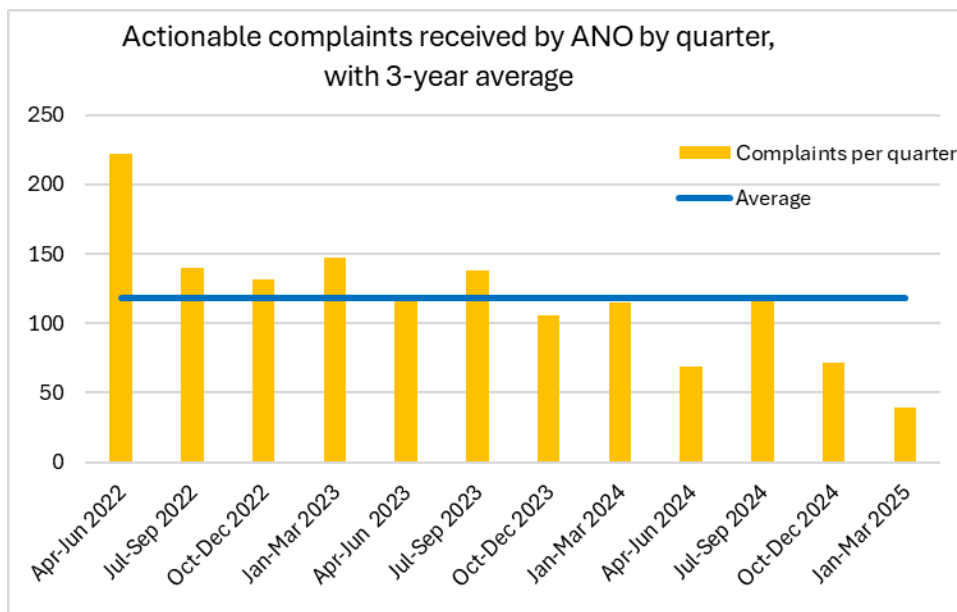


Figure 5 – Actionable complaints received by ANO by quarter, with 3-year average for complaint trends.

Many of the actionable complaints received this quarter continue to be attributed to the opening and operation of the new runway for Brisbane, with 12 complaints (31%).

Figure 6 below shows the breakdown of complaints by airport, where it could be identified.

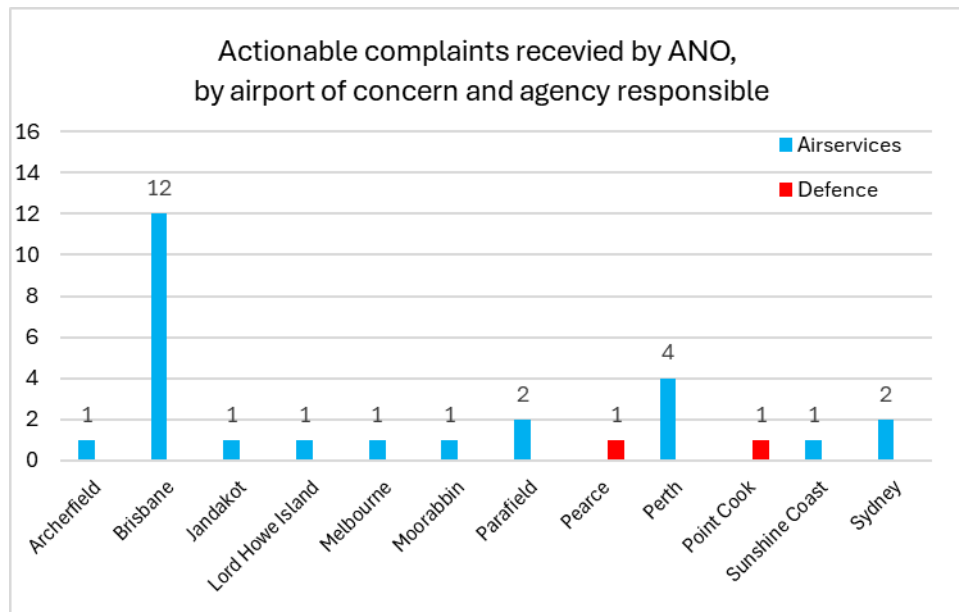


Figure 6 – Actionable complaints received by ANO by airport of concern and agency, January – March 2025.

In addition to the airport specific complaints above, a further 11 complaints did not include sufficient information to identify the airport of concern. This includes helicopter operations due to the range of potential helipads a helicopter may operate from.

### Closed complaints

The ANO closed 45 actionable complaints for the quarter, 42 relating to Airservices and 3 relating to Defence. In addition, all non-actionable complaints were closed, as noted in Section 2.1.

Figure 7 below, shows the outcomes of the complaints relating to Airservices: 32 were closed as the complainants had either not yet complained to or finalised their complaint with Airservices. Airservices agreed to re-engage with the complainant for 1 complaint and made a change in systems or processes in relation to 2 complaints. The remainder were closed as they provided no basis for proceeding further under the Charter or were referred to another government department as they raised issues within the relevant department's remit.

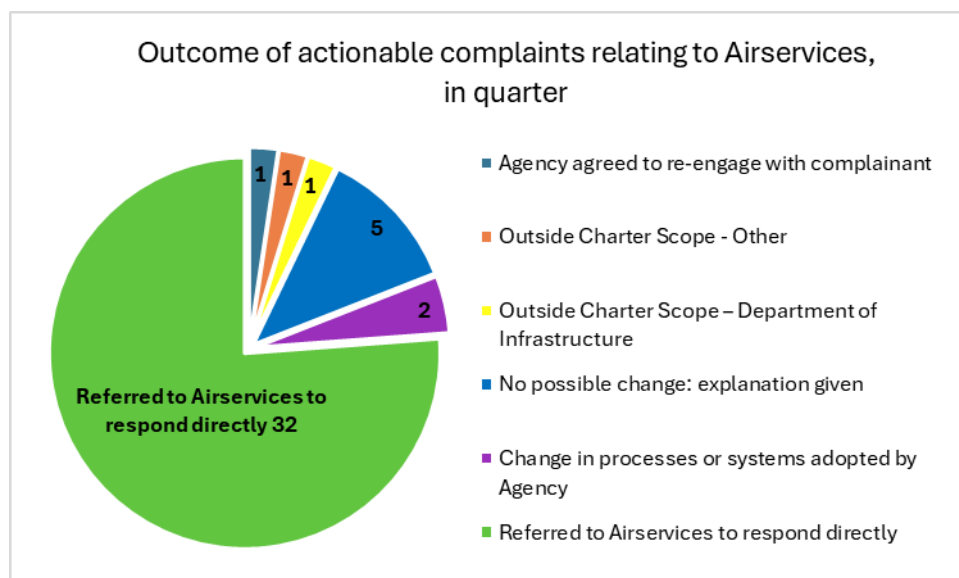


Figure 7 – Outcome of actionable complaints closed in quarter, related to Airservices.

Figure 8 below shows the outcomes of the complaints relating to Defence. 1 was referred to Defence to respond directly and Defence made a change in systems or processes for 2 complaints.

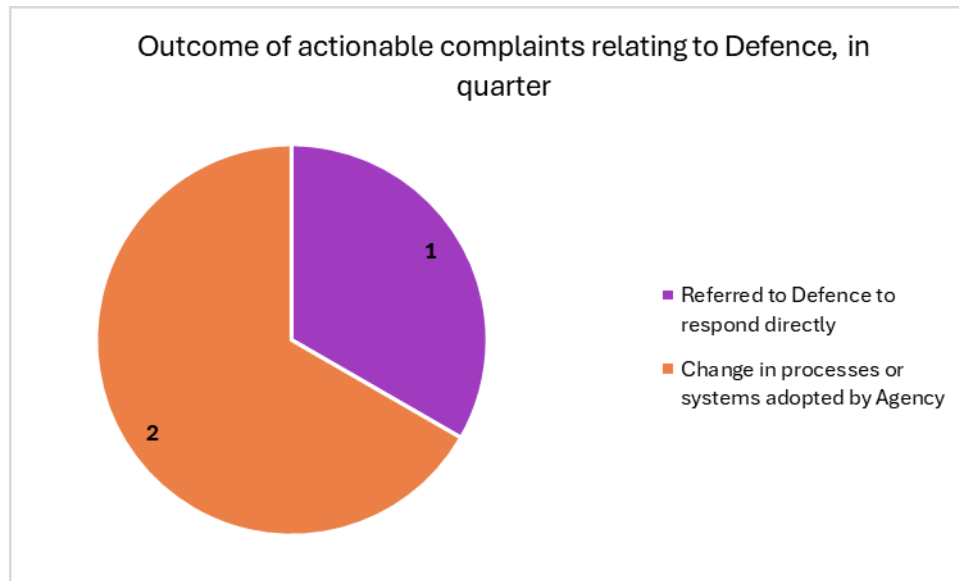


Figure 8 – Outcome of actionable complaints closed in quarter, related to Defence.

Reviews of Defence complaints are increasingly being resolved by changes in complaint handling processes or systems being adopted by Defence.

As of 1 April 2025, 7 actionable complaints remain open. The oldest complaint was received in December 2024 and is a complex matter involving Airservices' measurement and reporting of compliance with Noise Abatement Procedures (NAPS) regarding usage of the Gold Coast Instrument Landing System. The ANO has provided its assessment to Airservices and is evaluating the response. The remaining 6 complaints were received in February and March 2025.

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

## 2.3 Issues raised in complaints

The ANO captures and reports on the issues raised in actionable complaints during the quarter. The number of issues raised per quarter is greater than the number of complaints, as complainants normally raise several issues.

Actionable complaints received during this quarter are classified by the ANO office under one of 3 categories – 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 9 shows the distribution of the issues raised during the quarter, for complaints related to Defence and Airservices. As would be expected, the most common issues raised with the ANO office are aircraft noise related concerns.



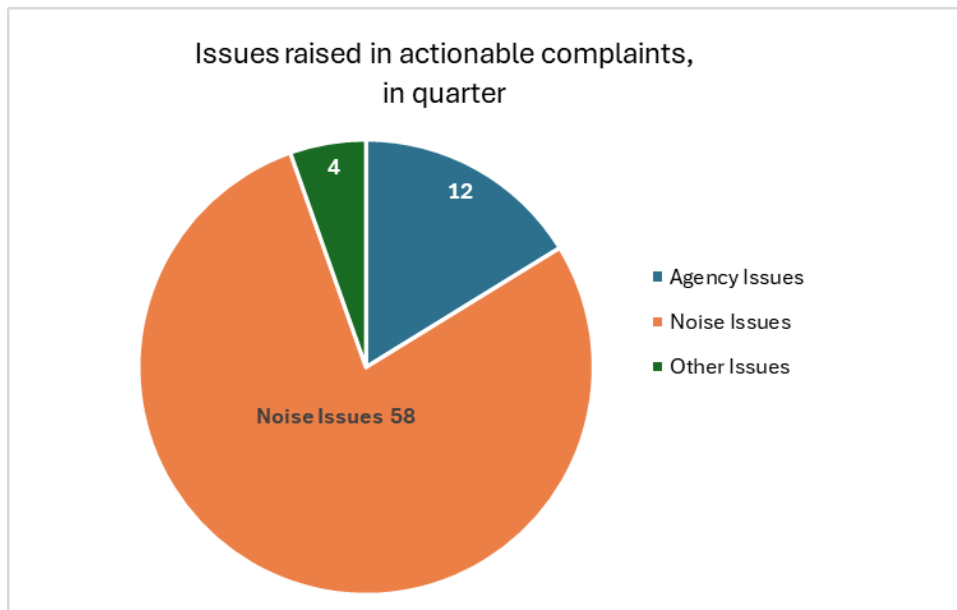


Figure 9 – Issues raised in actionable complaints to the ANO, January – March 2025.

### Issues by agency of concern

As shown in Figure 10 below, complaints about poor explanations and community engagement were the most common issues raised this quarter for Airservices, each being raised 3 times.

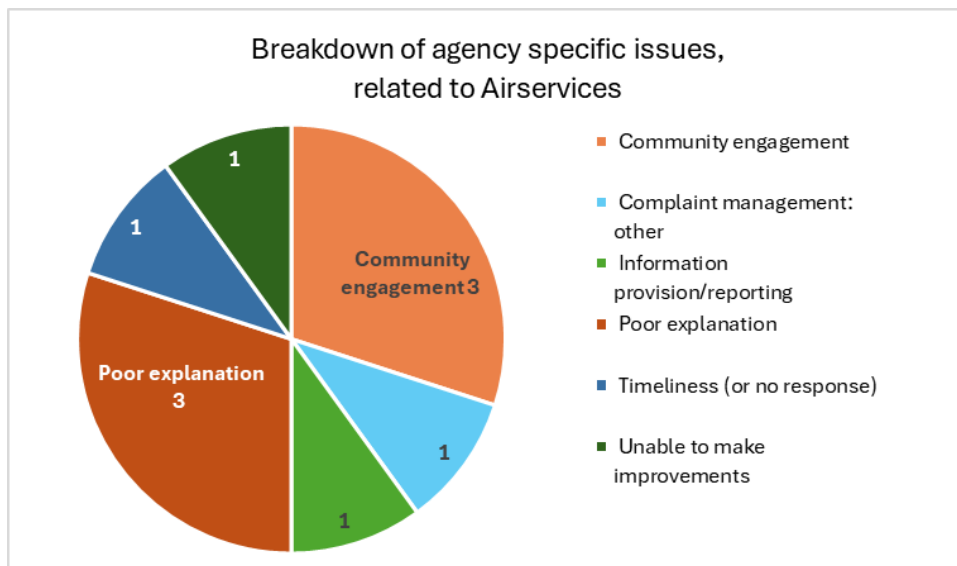


Figure 10 – Agency specific issues raised in actionable complaints related to Airservices, January – March 2025.

In relation to Defence, 1 Agency-related concern about timeliness (or no response) and 1 about aircraft noise from circuits, mainly at night, were raised this quarter.

Figure 11 breaks down noise complaints by the most common issues raised, associated with Airservices. The impacts of aircraft noise on health and sleep continue to be dominant issues in relation to civilian aircraft operations. Concerns about changed flight paths also featured prominently.

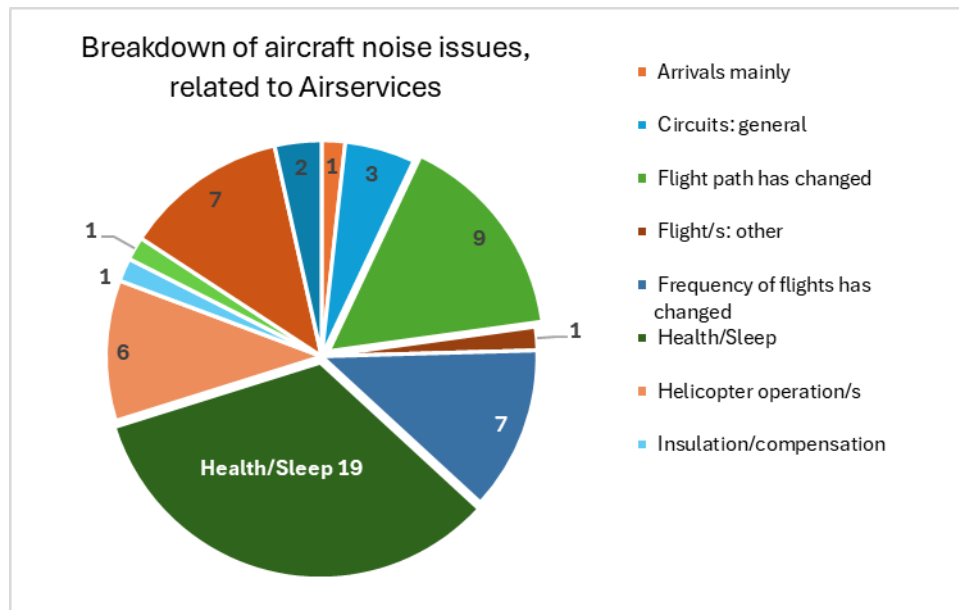


Figure 11 – Aircraft noise related issues raised in actionable complaints related to Airservices, January – March 2025.

4 issues outside of the jurisdiction of the ANO were also raised – 3 seeking curfews and 1 seeking changes to the mandate of Airservices.

## 2.4 Community engagement and noise information provision activities

The ANO office is invited to regularly attend airport Community Aviation Consultation Groups (CACGs) as an observer. Attending CACGs enables the ANO to observe Airservices' and/or Defence's engagement and information provision activities to the community, increase awareness of issues for individual airports and communities, and to promote the ANO's functions. The ANO office attended the Gold Coast, Hobart, Perth, Parafield and Moorabbin CACGs this quarter.

## 2.5 Liaison with Noise Complaints Information Service (NCIS)

The ANO office and Airservices' NCIS team continue to hold regular meetings. In addition to formal meetings, staff from the ANO office and NCIS team speak regularly to discuss matters identified through individual reviews.

## 2.6 Liaison with Defence

The ANO office held its regular quarterly meeting as well as informal meetings with the Staff Officer, Aircraft Noise Management for Defence, as required throughout the quarter. This included discussing the findings of individual reviews and broader aircraft noise management issues and opportunities.

### 3 Key performance indicators

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The ANO office reviewed and amended the key performance indicators (KPIs) for its complaint handling processes, with the new KPI targets coming into effect from 1 July 2024. The KPI targets apply to all actionable complaints received by the ANO office.

KPIs for complaints managed by the ANO office are divided based on whether the complaint is a single complaint or part of a multi-complaint review. 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.

Separate KPIs 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 remaining open longer than individual complaints.

#### 3.1 Acknowledgement of complaints

The ANO has a KPI of 2 days and 3 days to acknowledge complaints related to single complaints and multi-complaints, respectively. This quarter, all single complaints received were acknowledged within the KPI target. No multi-complaints were received in the quarter.

#### 3.2 Determination of complaints

Once a complaint is received, the ANO has 7 days for single complaints, or 14 days for multi-complaints, to determine whether the complaint is within the scope of the ANO Charter. These targets reflect a reduction of 7 days, from the 2021-2024 KPI targets, both for single and multi-complaints.

One single complaint failed this KPI during the quarter.

#### 3.3 Progress reports to complainants

The ANO has a KPI to report progress to complainants every 28 days, which was met for all complaints in this quarter.

#### 3.4 Time taken for final assessment provision to Agency

This KPI measures the time from commencement of a review to the provision of an ANO assessment to Airservices and Defence. This KPI was only applied to multi-complaint reviews but there is no reason why it should not also apply to assessments resulting from single complaints. The KPIs have been amended accordingly.

The ANO's assessment of a complaint regarding operation of the Gold Coast ILS mentioned above was provided to Airservices 3.5 months after commencement of the review.

#### 3.5 Time taken to finalise complaints

All 42 actionable complaints closed in this quarter were single complaints.

Targets for the finalisation of single complaints was one of the KPIs amended, with a new target for 50% of complaints to be closed within a month of receipt. As shown in Figure 12 below, 35 complaints (74%) achieved this target. A further 8 single complaints were closed

within 3 months from receipt and 3 within 6 months. One complaint was closed after more than 12 months, this was a complex matter involving Defence and noise impacts of operations from multiple army and air force bases.

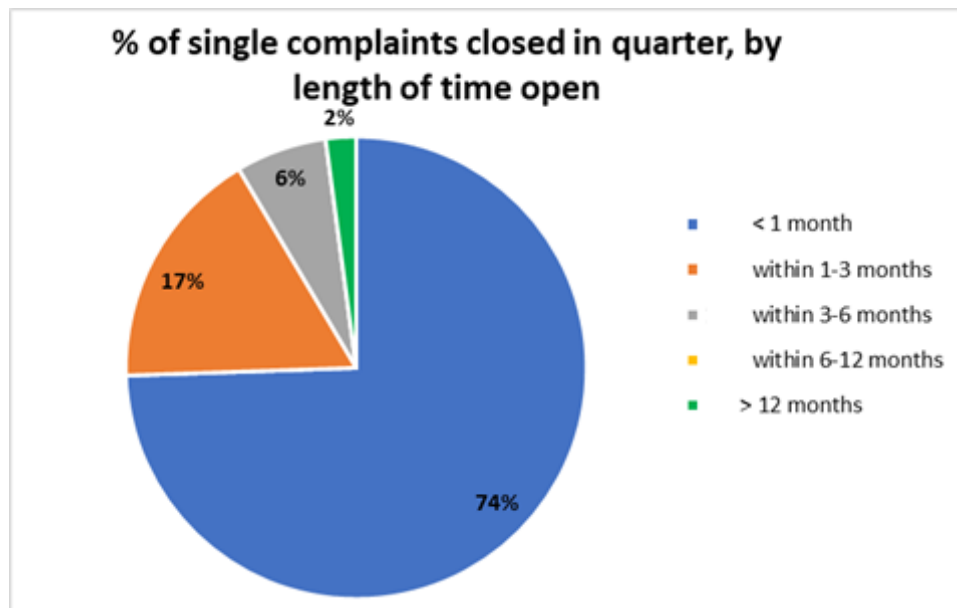


Figure 12 – % of single complaints closed in quarter, by length of time open.

Full KPI performance data for the quarter is presented at Appendix 3.

### 3.6 Complaints about the ANO

In February 2025, one complaint was received about the ANO's findings in its public report of August 2021 regarding Airservices' community engagement before commencement of the flight paths associated with Brisbane's new parallel runway. The issue was discussed with the complainant, who did not take further action.

### 3.7 Implementation of ANO recommendations - Hobart

Following review of complaints about the operation of Noise Abatement Procedures (NAPs) associated with Hobart Airport, the ANO recommended that Airservices review its procedures for determining the outcomes of options and proposals from the affected communities. In response, Airservices developed a Post Implementation Review (PIR) Procedure (ATS-PROC-0152) and consulted with the ANO before it was finalised.

Airservices has advised the ANO that it has implemented and publicly published its new procedure, available [here](#). Staff across relevant areas received training on the new procedure in February 2025. The ANO now considers the matter resolved.

Kieran Pehm

Aircraft Noise Ombudsman

15 April 2025

## Appendix 1 Statistics for complaints received in quarter

The following tables detail the statistics for complaints received in the quarter.

<b>AIRSERVICES - ACTIONABLE COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>Jan-25</b>	<b>Feb-25</b>	<b>Mar-25</b>	<b>Total for quarter</b>
Complaints received	12	13	11	36
Complaints closed:	15	18	9	42

Total complaints closed - not reviewed:	13	13	8	34
Complainant did not provide further information	0	0	0	0
Outside Charter Scope - CASA	0	0	0	0
Outside Charter Scope – Department of Infrastructure	0	1	0	1
Outside Charter Scope - Minister	0	0	0	0
Outside Charter Scope - Other	0	0	1	1
Referred to Airservices to respond directly	13	12	7	32

Total complaints closed - reviewed:	2	5	1	8
No change possible - explanation provided	1	4	0	5
Agency agreed to reengage with complainant	1	0	0	1
Change in processes or systems adopted by Agency	0	1	1	2
Not resolved - Action taken by Agency to encourage change by others	0	0	0	0

<b>DEFENCE - ACTIONABLE COMPLAINTS</b>	<b>Jan-25</b>	<b>Feb-25</b>	<b>Mar-25</b>	<b>Total for quarter</b>
Complaints received:	0	1	1	2
Complaints closed:	1	1	1	3

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

Total complaints closed - reviewed:	1	0	1	2
No change possible - explanation provided	0	0	0	0
Agency agreed to reengage with complainant	0	0	0	0
Change in processes or systems adopted by Agency	1	0	1	2
Not resolved - Action taken by Agency to encourage change by others	0	0	0	0

<b>SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS HANDLED</b>	<b>Airservices</b>	<b>Defence</b>	<b>No agency assigned*</b>	<b>Total for quarter</b>
Actionable complaints open at 1 January 2025(first day of quarter):	12	2	0	<b>14</b>
Non-actionable complaints received:	3,041	0	0	<b>3,041</b>
Actionable complaints received:	36	2	1	<b>39</b>
Actionable complaints closed:	42	3	0	<b>45</b>
Actionable complaints open at 1 April 2025 (first day of next quarter):	6	1	0	<b>7</b>

\*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.

## Appendix 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
<b>Recommendation 1</b> – 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.	<b>In progress:</b> Airservices advised that with the approval of the Melbourne Airport's Major Development Plan (MDP), they have recommenced work in relation to the East Melbourne Group (EMG) suggestions and are currently reviewing how the final approved MDP may impact these suggestions.

### Airservices – Investigation of complaints about the proposed Hobart Noise Abatement Procedure trial (July 2024)

Ongoing recommendations	ANO assessment of agency response
<b>Recommendation 1</b> – Airservices should prioritise the implementation of recommendations identified through its review of the end-to-end decision-making processes related to flight path changes where related to noise improvement opportunities identified through post-implementation reviews or suggestions made to Airservices by community members. The procedures developed as a result of the review should ensure that the responsibilities of decision makers and relevant considerations are clear to all relevant sections of Airservices. The procedures should also require publication of the outcome and reasons for the final decision. Airservices should also implement appropriate training in the updated processes to ensure understanding and compliance across all sections.	<b>Resolved:</b> Airservices advised they have now implemented and publicly published the PIR procedure, with relevant staff trained in its use in February 2025.

## Appendix 3 Key performance indicators for ANO complaint handling

The following table summarises the performance of the ANO against the identified complaint handling KPIs for January-March 2025. KPI performance is reported below for actionable complaints, over the quarter. Performance against the ANO KPIs is determined based on 12 months of data, for July-June of each financial year and reported in the ANO Annual Report.

Complaint type	Key performance indicator	Benchmark	% Met target (Jan-Mar 2025)
Single complaint	Acknowledgement of complaint	Within 2 business days	100%
	Decision on whether complaint is within jurisdiction	Within 7 days	98%
	Update to complainant on progress of complaint	Every 28 days	100%
		1 update failed	0%
		2 updates failed	0%
		3 updates failed	0%
	Time from complaint received to final assessment provision to Agency	25% < 3 months	0%
		50% within 3-6 months	100%
		25% within 6-12 months	0%
		0% > 12 months	0%
	Time from complaint received to closed	50% < 1 month	74%
		25% within 1-3 months	17%
		15% within 3-6 months	6%
		10% within 6-12 months	0%
		0% > 12 months	2%
Complaints in a multi-complaint review	Acknowledgement of complaint	Within 3 business days	0%
	Decision on whether complaint is within jurisdiction	Within 14 days	0%
	Update to complainant on progress of complaint	Every 28 days or less	0%
		1 update failed	0%
		2 updates failed	0%
		3 updates failed	0%
	Time from complaint received to final assessment provision to Agency	25% < 3 months	0%
		50% within 3-6 months	0%
		25% within 6-12 months	0%
		0% > 12 months	0%
	Time from complaint received to closed	50% < 6 months	0%
		50% within 6-12 months	0%
		0% > 12 months	0%