



**Australian Government**

**Department of Infrastructure and Transport**

Mr Stephen Palethorpe  
Secretary, Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Palethorpe

### **AVIATION TRANSPORT SECURITY AMENDMENT (SCREENING) BILL 2012**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the submission from Mr Graham West dated 29 March 2012 to the Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport, about the Aviation Transport Security Amendment (Screening) Bill 2012.

The Office of Transport Security within the Department of Infrastructure and Transport is the Australian Government's preventive security regulator for the aviation and maritime sectors, and its primary adviser on transport security. OTS is responsible for administering an intelligence-led, risk-based preventive security regime for these sectors. OTS works with the aviation and maritime industry to achieve sustainable and proportional preventive security measures that are commensurate with the nature and level of the terrorist threat.

The *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004* and the accompanying Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005 underpin OTS' regulatory activities in the aviation sector. Notices issued under Regulation 4.17 of the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005 (aviation screening notices) contain security sensitive information. The release of such information to persons not engaged in the aviation security industry and without a genuine need to know may adversely affect aviation security outcomes.

If an individual is not satisfied with any aspect of the screening process, there are a number of avenues available for pursuing a complaint. In the first instance, they can ask to speak with a supervisor at the screening point. If the individual is not satisfied with the response of the supervisor, or if they wish to make a formal complaint about screening after they have left the airport, they can contact the airport directly. If contacting the airport does not resolve the issue, complaints can be made directly to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport. It should be noted that the people who conduct screening are not employees of the Department of Infrastructure and Transport. The companies who conduct screening do so under contract to the relevant Screening Authority at the airport, which is the legal entity appointed by the Department to conduct screening.

I note Mr West's claims that he has witnessed several hundred unlawful acts committed by screening staff in the last few years. The Office of Transport Security has undertaken

significant research and analysis of aviation security screening procedures over the past five – six years. The Aviation Security Screening Review of 2008 noted that 94% of passengers surveyed were very satisfied with the screening process. Since 2009, the Office of Transport Security has been working with Screening Authorities and screening service providers to enhance the professionalism, training, culture and customer service provided at security screening points. The Office of Transport Security has also commenced work on the development of an appropriate training accreditation regime designed to ensure security screening staff are appropriately trained for their duties and that their competencies are up to date.

‘Continuous improvement’ of aviation security related procedures, technology, legislation and human factors is a key driver of OTS’ work plan. OTS is committed to ensuring Australia’s aviation sector is as secure as possible against the threat of terrorism and other acts of unlawful interference whilst maintaining an operational environment that facilitates the speedy movement of people and goods.

Should the Committee require any further information in relation to the issues raised in Mr West’s submission I would be happy to be of assistance.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Retter, AM  
Executive Director

／ May 2012