

Committee Secretary
Senate and Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT
2600

Inquiry into Airservices Australia's Management of Aircraft Noise

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise.

Background

Gold Coast Airport (GCA) has for many years established an Airport Noise Abatement Consultative Committee (ANACC). This is the forum for the local community to raise issues in regard to aircraft noise for each of their areas.

GCA has a curfew between 2300 to 0600 Queensland time.

The main runway at GCA runs parallel with the ocean.

ANACC

Airservices were approached to Chair this committee and this was flatly rejected. The airport realising the importance of keeping the community informed have continued despite the lack of support from senior Airservices staff.

At a local level the Airservices ATC Manager attends the meeting and provides support that is well received and the community is extremely grateful for the role the ATC Manager performs. From time to time other attendees from Airservices have participated from the environment department, noise monitoring area, enroute controllers and RNP specialists. Their attendance and expertise is welcomed but rarely results in any tangible outcomes. Many offers are made but very few are followed up on.

ANACC has a fantastic representation from the community, both councils Gold Coast City Council and Tweed Shire Council, Federal Member for Richmond, Virgin Blue, Jetstar, Air New Zealand and General Aviation operators.



In addition due to the population and number of flights to and from the south an ANACC Sub-committee has been formed for southern members.

Aircraft Noise Enquiry Line

A consistent theme and comments from residents in regard to the noise enquiry line that is provided by Airservices is captured by a comment from a local resident below.

“I have rung the noise complaints telephone number 1800 802 584, they listen politely but nothing is done”

The noise enquiry line provides statistical data and on the surface appears to be managing complaints well. However it is the actions from the complaints that are sadly lacking.

The ANACC cannot clearly identify any change in behaviour as a result of making a complaint to the noise enquiry line.

Flight paths

The flight paths both arriving and departing the Gold Coast need to be reviewed or finely tuned.

Departures to the south head straight through the most densely populated area.

Opportunity exists for these flights to depart out over the ocean or depart over the Tweed River reducing the impact of aircraft noise. If Airservices charter is to reduce the impact of aircraft noise or ensure the least amount of people are affected by aircraft noise then they have failed to demonstrate this for residents to the south.

NSW Department of Planning has forecast the growth in the Tweed Shire from 1996 a population of 60,000 to 2015 a population of 90,000. The flight paths were established circa 1996. Airservices needs to consider population densities when determining flight paths.

Residents to the north would be benefited by a review of the arrival tracks and ensure that aircraft arriving from the northern area are kept over water for as long as possible.

Required Navigational Performance

This new navigational procedure provides the catalyst for flight path reviews and can provide a better outcome for residents for noise and will assist with the reduction of emissions. It will greatly assist airlines and can assist in avoiding diversions and go rounds due to periods of low visibility.



Gold Coast Airport would like to be given a higher priority for the implementation of RNP and we have indicated this to Airservices Australia on numerous occasions.

The ANACC is fully supportive of RNP as the committee can see the benefits associated with this technology.

Airservices representation

As Airservices has a regulatory responsibility to manage noise it is important their representative is empowered to make decisions. More importantly that they are reporting back to the Executive of Airservices the concerns raised at local community forums like ANACC..

It is appropriate that a representative for Airservices is the Chair of any noise abatement committee.

Simply, while the airport provides the infrastructure it is Airservices who determine where and when aircraft go!

Webtraks

Airservices introduced Webtraks as a tool for local communities to check on the flight paths that aircraft fly. Now local communities can see for themselves the flight path an aircraft has chosen.

This is a fantastic tool. The ANACC can now show clearly that aircraft are not flying the intended procedures.

Summary

In summary there is an opportunity to improve with the management of aircraft noise emissions and consultation for Airservices Australia. They need to be accountable to ensure the intent of the legislation is upheld. The introduction of an Ombudsmen is significant and is welcomed.

I would be happy to expand further on any of the issues raised.

Rob Porter

General Manager
Operations and Standards
(ANACC Chairman)

