

Opening statement – Andreas Marcelja, Acting CEO and Director of Aviation Safety, CASA

CASA's priority is the safety of the millions of Australians and international visitors who fly in our skies each year.

We are very mindful of the impacts that aircraft noise has on communities, and we support the work of other agencies and aviation operators to minimise those impacts wherever possible.

The Civil Aviation Act 1988 says that we must regard the safety of air navigation as our most important consideration, and it tops the list of policy objectives in the Government's Australian Airspace Policy Statement.

Our work includes ensuring Australian airspace management aligns with international standards set out by the International Civil Aviation Organization. It is about making sure that our airspace has the right level of air traffic services, that aircraft have the right equipment, and that pilots have the right skills, to enable flights to be operated safely.

Changes in navigation technology mean we no longer prescriptively regulate air routes and airways for high altitude air traffic, and have not done so since 2013.

We work with Airservices Australia and consult with airspace users and other stakeholders on proposed airspace changes and the operational risks involved.

While we don't design landing and departure paths to airports, we do examine proposed procedures to ensure safety before approving them. Environmental impact assessments and community consultation for these procedures at our major capital cities are conducted by Airservices, and they form part of the airport development planning and consultation processes.

We have qualified obligations in relation to the environmental impacts of aviation activities, but only to the extent practicable, and safety must always be our principal focus and primary responsibility.

Under the Civil Aviation Act, we do not have the authority to impose specifically noise related requirements on holders of any civil aviation authorisations. Any requirements we impose must relate to aviation safety.

CASA is supportive of initiatives that reduce the impact of aircraft noise, but never at the expense of safety.