



Gold Coast Airport

6 July 2005

Mr Russell Chafer
Committee Secretary
Joint Committee of Public Accounts & Audit
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Russell

RE: REVIEW OF AVIATION SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity for Gold Coast Airport Limited (GCAL) to provide a submission to the above review. Please find attached our submission for consideration by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA).

GCAL is a private company which is part of the Queensland Airports Limited (QAL) group which leases and operates airports at Gold Coast, Townsville and Mount Isa. GCAL's lease is for fifty (50) years with an option for a further forty-nine (49) years and commenced 28 May 1998.

GCAL is of the view that this further review by the JCPAA of security following the tabling of its "*Report 400: Review of Aviation Security in Australia*" in June 2004 is motivated by community policing issues and not any changes to Aviation Security. In our view community policing is the responsibility of Federal and State Police Services and the costs of provision ought to be borne by the responsible Governments and not the Aviation Industry.

GCAL would welcome the opportunity to attend the Committee and appreciates the opportunity to participate in this review.

Yours faithfully

Barrie Briggs
General Manager Aviation
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- a) **Regulation of Aviation Security by the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services, and the Department's response to Aviation security incidents since June 2004;**

GCAL is of the opinion that the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) has handled its responsibilities with respect to Aviation Security compliance in an appropriate manner. For the most part, DOTARS handles the competing political industry and public interests well, however recent events have seen the blurring of what is a security requirement and what is a policing issue.

The Schapelle Corby case and the drug issues with Sydney baggage handlers has nothing to do with threats to aircraft safety and is about community policy/criminal activity and not aviation security.

DOTARS handles its responsibilities as regulator of aviation security well; they should not also be responsible for criminal and community policing.

- b) **Compliance with Commonwealth Security Requirements by Airport operators at major and regional Airports;**

GCAL takes its security responsibilities very seriously and ensures that we are compliant with all DOTARS requirements. GCAL is represented at quarterly Industry meetings at which the Department updates Airlines and Airport Operators of relevant issues.

- c) **Compliance with Commonwealth security requirements by airlines;**

This issue is best discussed with relevant airlines, however in our experience airlines have a similar commitment to aviation safety and security as GCAL.

- d) **The impact of overseas security requirements on Australian aviation security**

This issue deals with both the arrival of international aircraft to Australia and the influence on Australian aviation security practices in such countries as the United Kingdom and the USA.

Dealing first with international arrivals to Australia; there is considerable concern with the aviation security practices of our northern neighbours. Their level of security is years behind advancements made in Australian ports.

In relation to aviation security practices overseas, there needs to be critical assessment as to their appropriateness in the Australian context. Slavishly following what is done in the UK or the USA may not always deliver a satisfactory security outcome and invariably adds cost to the industry.

e) Cost impacts of security upgrades, particularly for regional airports;

The costs of meeting the many and varied security requirements mandated by the Australian Government have cost the Australian aviation industry hundreds of millions of dollars. Invariably, the security requirements have been unplanned and have required industry to fund the associated costs from outside industry's operating and infrastructure budgets.

Although GCAL is unable to speak on behalf of other smaller regional ports, we can make the observations that at Mount Isa, under the new requirements to upgrade fencing, it will cost in excess of \$700,000 which will be passed on as a mandated cost to paying passengers. Cost impacts such as this may result in the Airline declining to service the port with the resulting lowering of service to our regional communities.

As yet, costs associated with vehicle and personnel inspection points covering access into and out of the airside environment are still to be finalised but will cost the industry millions of dollars and is driven by 'criminal activity' not aviation security.

f) Privacy implications of greater security measures

GCAL believes the Government to be aware of the legal issues associated with the new "inspection" point proposals, and expanding the boundaries for background checks for ASIC's. The Government needs to be aware of the implications of the displacement of persons who prior to the Government's initiative were considered to be suitable for ASIC issue and employment in the aviation industry.

g) Opportunities to enhance security measures presented by current and emerging technologies, including measures to combat identity fraud

Industry and DOTARS continue to work closely together on the evaluation and investigation of current and emerging technologies. This is mainly done through the Technology Working Group which reports to the Industry Consultative Meeting quarterly.

h) Procedures for, and security of, baggage handling operations at international, domestic and regional airports, by both airlines and airports

GCAL has just installed the latest airline explosive detection equipment (L3 MVT x-ray machine) as part of the Government's previous initiative of assessing international and domestic checked baggage. This latest technology for the identification of explosives has been introduced via consultation between airport, airline and the Office of Transport Security and ensures that a high level of confidence exists with our customers that aircraft are suitably protected.

Access to our baggage make up area is controlled via authorised access controls and will shortly be augmented by a patrolled "inspection" point that will check ASIC's and equipment of people entering the area.