



Submission No:70.....

THE CABINET OFFICE
NEW SOUTH WALES

26 AUG 2005

TCO/04821

Mr Bob Baldwin MP
Chair
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Baldwin

I refer to your invitation for the New South Wales Government to make a submission to the Joint Committee's inquiry into developments in aviation security in Australia since the Joint Committee's *Report 400: Review of Aviation Security in Australia*. The NSW Government considers that the allegations of criminal activity at Sydney Airport recently revealed by Operation Mocha highlight the need for this further review, and for the Commonwealth Government to accept fully its responsibility for the safety and security of aviation in Australia.

Recent Commonwealth Announcements

NSW notes that the Commonwealth has recently announced measures to tighten security at Australia's major airports. In light of the allegations regarding baggage handling staff, NSW agrees that the background checking of all holders of Aviation Security Identification Cards is essential. NSW also notes the Commonwealth's announcement that it will require major airports to intensify the inspection of all persons, vehicles, and goods entering and leaving the airside of major airports, and that this increased scrutiny will include airline and airport staff, contractors, and their possessions. Such measures are essential in discharging the Commonwealth's responsibilities, but must be implemented in close consultation with NSW authorities to ensure they are fully effective.

In relation to such measures, the Minister for Police, the Hon PC Scully MP, has advised that access control systems should be operating at all points of movement from airside to landside. The Minister understands that some doors and gates into the airside at Sydney Airport currently lack electronic security requiring presentation of a security pass.

NSW is also concerned to ensure that mechanisms are in place to deal with the possible corruption risks faced by officials from all government agencies that have access to airside. This is not just a matter of recruitment checks, but of ongoing monitoring of staff. The Minister for Police advises that it may be relevant to consider whether the jurisdiction of the proposed Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity should be extended to cover a wider range of Commonwealth officials than currently contemplated.

NSW supports any appropriate measures the Commonwealth may wish to take to allow video surveillance in all areas of airports.

Regulation of aviation security under the *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004*

NSW recognises that aviation security is a complicated area involving multiple jurisdictions, organisations and Government agencies. This complexity, coupled with the dynamic nature of the current security environment, highlights the need for effective coordination and communication mechanisms. This is especially critical in relation to counter terrorism preparedness and response in relation to the larger airports. NSW submits that consideration should be given to the following:

- Establishment of aviation security committees for each State and Territory comprising executive personnel from both State/Territory and Commonwealth stakeholders. This structure would ensure coordinated implementation of security strategies across all organisations and levels of government.
- Development of agreed communication and consultation protocols, particularly in relation to liaison with NSW Police and any proposal that has the potential to impact on the resources or service delivery of State agencies. An example of the need for this is the newly created position of Aviation Security Controller. It is understood that this position may be intended to have a role in directing the use of State resources, but no consultation has occurred with NSW Police or other NSW agencies.
- Regular auditing by Department of Transport and Regional Services of the measures put in place by aviation industry participants to meet the requirements of the *Aviation Transport Security Act 2004* and the *Aviation Transport Security Regulation 2005*. The dynamic nature of the current security environment demands that security activities and infrastructure be constantly monitored to ensure that they respond adequately to developing threats.

- A risk assessment of general aviation airports. It is noted that there are now 37 security controlled airports within NSW and that security in relation to these airports has been addressed through amendments to the Aviation Transport Security Act 2004. However, these measures do not apply to general aviation airports. Due to the close proximity of a number of general aviation airports to the Sydney metropolitan area, it would be prudent for a further risk assessment of general aviation airports to be undertaken. This risk assessment should comprehensively measure the effectiveness of work done to date, including the level of compliance with regulatory requirements including anti-theft measures, and should identify the degree of residual risk.

Notwithstanding Commonwealth funding assistance, I am advised that some local councils still have concerns about the longer term financial implications of the new regional airport security requirements. Any additional measures that may be required following further risk assessments have the potential to place additional demands on resources. Police services in particular generally become a key preventative and response component of any security plan. Implementation of any additional security or regulatory measures should include prior consultation with all affected organisations, including NSW Police and local councils, to ensure the Commonwealth makes available sufficient resources.

Identity Crime

Identity security is a growing issue for Australian and overseas governments and has serious implications for both general law enforcement and the national approach to counter terrorism.

NSW is aware that the Commonwealth government has taken steps in this area, including establishing five national working groups with State involvement to oversee the development of new security measures.

New technologies can assist in securing identity documents, including the use of biometric technology such as facial and iris scanning. This is a rapidly emerging and complex field. National co-ordination and Commonwealth leadership is clearly required to ensure consistent technological standards and procedures for identity document security. Commonwealth funding will also be needed to conduct proper trials of high-technology solutions such as biometric identifiers.

NSW has previously indicated that it is interested in working with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories on the issue of biometrics. As the Aviation Security Identification Card is a key security measure and fraudulent use of the cards is a significant security risk, inclusion of some form of biometric measure on the card should be a matter for ongoing consideration.

The NSW Government is happy to cooperate in any way possible to facilitate further tightening of aviation security measures and to ensure relevant NSW agencies assist the Commonwealth Government with any necessary advice or liaison.

Yours sincerely



R
Roger B Wilkins
Director-General