

17<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Our Ref: Security 41-03

Mr Bob Charles MP  
Chairman  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Charles

I refer to your letter of 2 December 2003 seeking additional further information from Virgin Blue to assist the work of the Joint Committee on Public Accounts and Audit on its inquiry into aviation security. .

I offer the following response to the specific matters you raised in your letter to me:

**1 Carriage of Persons in Custody (PIC)**

Virgin Blue refers to these people as Persons in Lawful Custody (PILC). Since becoming involved in carrying this category of passenger earlier this year, we have only carried a small number. Prior to agreeing to carriage, each prisoner is assessed by the Virgin Blue Security Department to determine whether they pose any risk to other passengers or the crew, or the safety of the aircraft. Thus far, we have refused to carry two prisoners due to unacceptable risk.

**2 New Technology**

We are currently considering a number of issues with respect to Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) on board Virgin Blue aircraft. Whilst we are committed to ensuring the highest level of a safety and security for our passengers and crew, we have some practical concerns with CCTV monitoring on aircraft by the flight deck crew. They are directed not to open reinforced cockpit doors whilst in-flight, except in certain circumstances. Should they, for example, observe on CCTV an incident occur in the galley or rear of the aircraft, they would normally not open the cockpit door, doing so could place them and the aircraft at greater risk. They may observe a particular incident on board which may entice them to open the reinforced door and enter the aircraft to would-be terrorists. There are also some technical issues related to CCTV which we are considering in more detail. The wireless threat notification system is also being examined in the same process.

3 **Photo ID for Passengers**

At all ports throughout Australia, Virgin Blue requires passengers to produce photographic ID prior to being issued a ticket and boarding pass. The difference in the trial at Newcastle is that the photo ID is further required at the screening point.

At Newcastle, the sterile area is very small and could not hold anymore persons than the designated passengers. This process would not create any better security outcome at any larger airports where the sterile area is used by all general public who have gone through the screening process. Should this be implemented at the boarding gate it would alleviate any potential for a persons to exchange boarding passes, tickets or give the ticket to a third party. I believe that it would create a greater security outcome if implemented at the boarding gate as opposed to the screening point.

4 **Access to Sterile Areas**

The issue of travelling passengers only entering sterile areas can be handled differently at some airports. . In small airports, where the sterile area is so small that only travelling passengers can fit, we have no concerns. However, in larger airports, where there are extensive facilities and space within the sterile area, we believe that other people should be permitted, with no reduction in security.

5 **Secure Cockpit Doors**

Virgin Blue is committed to having all its aircraft fitted with reinforced flight deck doors by March 2004. This is subject to availability and delivery schedule.

Should you require any further information or detail please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Scanlon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Scanlon  
Head of Security  
Virgin Blue Airlines Pty Ltd