

**Mr John Carter  
Inquiry Secretary  
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

**Dear Mr Carter**

**REVIEW OF AVIATION SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA - REQUEST FOR  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Thank you for your letter of 2 December 2003 to the Department of Premier and Cabinet seeking additional information from Victoria for the Committee's review of aviation security. I am pleased to provide the following information in response to the Committee's questions.

*How many State Police officers are stationed at, and/or patrol Melbourne domestic and international terminals?*

The Victoria Police presence at Melbourne Airport currently consists of two members from the Broadmeadows Police Station, who staff the Airport Police Station and conduct foot patrols between 9am and 5pm, seven days a week. It is also important to note that the Broadmeadows Police Station is in very close proximity to the Airport, enabling a response time of less than ten minutes for serious incidents.

*Is the Police presence continuous or for just part of the day?*

The presence of Victoria Police personnel is continuous between 9am and 5pm.

*Has the level of State Police presence changed over the past three years?*

The current level of staffing was established in 1999 and has not changed over the past three years.

*What is your response time for attending incidents at the airport?*

Victoria's response times depend on the nature of the offence, as well as the location of police units. In the event of an incident within the airport that would affect or disrupt aviation security, Victoria Police would be at the location within ten minutes.

*The Committee observes that there are many and a growing number of retail outlets at airport terminals. What is the nature and level of crime at Melbourne Airport?*

Melbourne Airport, due to its size, experiences the types of crime similar to a small city but at a significantly lower level. Offences commonly reported at the Airport include: minor theft, deception, theft from and of motor vehicles, traffic offences, and wilful damage. Over the past three years, the monthly average of reported crimes at Melbourne Airport has been almost constant, with 17.16 in both 2000/01 and 2001/02 and 17.25 in 2002/03. Total reported crime numbers per year have stayed almost static, with 206 reported crimes in both 2000/01 and 2001/02, and 207 crimes reported in 2002/03.

*How has the nature and level of crime at Melbourne Airport changed over the past three years?*

See previous answer. There have been no discernible trends in the nature of crime at Melbourne Airport over the last three years. Theft (including from and of motor vehicles) remains the most highly reported offence.

*How many incidents of airport rage have been reported to State Police officers during the past three years?*

Quantifying the number of 'airport rage' incidents is problematic without a clear definition of 'airport rage'.

*Is there a trend in either the nature or number of incidents?*

On the data available to Victoria Police, it is not possible to identify a trend.

*Should the penalties for airport rage be brought closer to the penalties for 'air rage' – incidents occurring on board an aircraft? Why?*

It is difficult to answer this question without agreed definitions of 'air rage' and 'airport rage'. 'Air rage' offences fall under federal jurisdiction and are mandated by federal legislation, while offences committed in an airport are the responsibility of the State in which they are committed. In Victoria, there is not a designated offence of 'airport rage' but incidents that could be considered to be 'airport rage' could involve one or more of a wide range of existing behavioural offences, such as assault, offensive behaviour or indecent language. Each of these offences has a designated maximum penalty.

In deciding which offences may apply in a particular incident, Victorian criminal law would usually consider the conduct of the person and the likely consequences of the conduct, the circumstances of the conduct and the person's state of mind. The location of these offences is not generally considered relevant, as the nature of the offence is generally the same. As such, using indecent language or assaulting a person would not be considered a greater offence if it were committed in an airport or in any other location.

As 'Air rage' incidents directly endanger the safety of the aircraft and the lives of the passengers and crew, they are of a greater magnitude than incidents occurring within the airport. 'Airport rage' generally has a much reduced potential to endanger property or individuals and can usually be resolved relatively quickly.

As such, the current penalties for behavioural offences, including those at airports, appear appropriate and there does not appear to be a strong argument to link them, or adjust them to 'air rage' penalties or to recognise a specific offence of 'airport rage'.

I trust this information will assist the Committee's inquiry.

**Yours sincerely**

**TERRY MORAN**  
**Secretary**