

Airservices response to ANO report into complaints about the introduction of new flight paths in Hobart

Airservices has reviewed the ANO's report and accepted all of the recommendations.

In December 2017, Airservices completed a review into the effectiveness of community consultation resulting from proposed flight path changes and the report was provided to the ANO at that time (available on Airservices website¹). This internal review identified 29 improvement opportunities relating to the end-to-end environmental activities associated with our flight path design process. Related actions were completed by 31 March 2018 and covered areas such as:

- Building an 'environment by design' culture: including a shift toward the iterative design of flight path changes and the establishment of principles for a 'change team' to be implemented at the beginning of a flight path design process.
- Improving environmental assessments: including amending Airservices' Environment Management System so that a more detailed environmental assessment is required for flight path changes that overfly new communities and regional or rural areas; undertaking environmental risk assessments as part of the assessment process; and ensuring that assessments clearly define analysis against the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity (EPBC) Act* and Airservices criteria.
- Improving our community consultation planning: enhancing our stakeholder engagement plans to include 'likelihood to notice a difference' and to consider social impacts as well as the environmental assessment against the EPBC Act.

Airservices has mapped these actions to the ANO recommendations. In addition, there are three supplementary, but important, focus areas that management has underway that ensure continual improvement in the areas that Airservices and the ANO have recognised as requiring improvement.

The first is in regard to improving how community engagement is planned and delivered. To supplement the training and other initiatives identified by Airservices review, we are engaging external expertise to assist us to improve our processes and provide us advice to supplement our existing capability. This will support the improvement actions that have been put in place and assist in the change management of future flight path changes.

The second is to review and validate Airservices internal environmental criteria to ensure that they are fit for purpose and aligned to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity (EPBC) Act* requirements. We have commenced a review of these criteria against the EPBC Act and will seek the advice of the Department of the Environment and Energy to validate our review at the appropriate time.

The third key focus area is sustained focus on management accountability to improve the governance and decision making process from the commencement of any proposed flight path change, and we have established a more disciplined end to end process that embeds early involvement of senior management to support this.

Airservices takes our obligations in relation to community consultation seriously and is confident that these actions address the ANO's recommendations and will lead to a substantial improvement in the way we engage with the community in relation to proposed flight path changes.

¹ <http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/aircraftnoise/>

Context

In September 2017 Airservices introduced flight path changes at Hobart Airport to improve the safe and efficient operations of the airport by organising aircraft onto standard arrival and departure routes.

Known as 'SIDS and STARs', these standard routes are carefully designed to international requirements to keep traffic safely separated by the use of specific flight paths, levels, speed restrictions and check points.

This resulted in the concentration of aircraft noise and the transfer of aircraft noise from one segment of the community to another, with some community members experiencing an increase in aircraft noise as a result of the change and others experiencing an improvement in noise outcomes.

Airservices undertook an investigation into the change in response to the complaints raised by members of the community that were negatively affected by the change, and identified that its community consultation in respect of the change had been inadequate.

Airservices has commenced a subsequent review of the flight paths, and as part of this review Airservices will ensure that all potentially affected community members have an opportunity to input to the review.