

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The submission primarily addresses compliance with Commonwealth aviation security requirements by Cairns Port Authority at Cairns International Airport under the following headings:

- a. Legislation
- b. National Aviation Security Program
- c. Instruments issued under current legislation
- d. Review into Air Security Officers and Counter Terrorist First Response
- e. Division of Responsibilities AFP/State Police
- f. Additional Security Measures
- g. Retention of Industry Competence
- h. Recommendations

Cairns Port Authority harbours concerns that an appropriate balance is yet to be struck between 'outcomes' and 'prescription' in the draft aviation security legislation (Aviation Transport Security Bill, 2003) presently being considered. The appointment of aviation security inspectors from the ranks of law enforcement officers, the establishment of an accumulative demerit points system and those provisions dealing with persons in custody are of particular concern. The Department of Transport and Regional Services' approach to checked bag screening and the absence of any determination in relation to standards to be achieved in relation to checked bag screening are also covered in the submission.

The National Aviation Security Program is the most useful Government guide for the uniform development of airport and airline security programs. Appendices to the program addressing airport security planning guidance and aviation security crisis management are particularly useful and should be expanded to include a consistent industry assessment process in relation to chemical, biological and radiological threats (the more common of which are known as 'white powder' incidents). Despite a continuing international requirement, the National Aviation Security Program has not been updated since February 1999.

The necessity for consultation is as important in relation to the matter of developing instruments, or varying instruments, under current legislation as it is in the development of major industry policy initiatives. The submission addresses a recent Departmental initiative that varied an instrument and comments on an accompanying Security Guide that was considered extraordinarily generous in listing a comprehensive range of commercially available tools that might be approved for carriage by ACS and Australian Quarantine Inspection Service officers into sterile areas.

The long-standing Counter Terrorist First Response (CTFR) function at major airports is shortly to be recast. CTFR was reviewed in 1996 resulting in minimal change. The most recent review threatens to have a significantly greater impact. From the point of view of Cairns Port Authority, future arrangements need to take account of the specific requirements of airports and not leave the industry short of effective, on the ground, protective security.

Major anti-terrorist initiatives post September 11 inadvertently created some apprehension in the field of enforcement responsibility. The submission highlights one example where the flow-on effects of major initiatives had not permeated the field working levels of law enforcement. The division of responsibility between law enforcement and other agencies and a cooperative approach to incident resolution is a necessary adjunct to recognised aviation security practice.

The submission also highlights the need for industry to be kept informed of likely developments in the threat situation generally, and particularly as it affects the aviation industry.

The retention of a nucleus of industry specific knowledge and experience in the higher echelons of government is considered necessary to maintaining a reputation of professional competence in the domestic and international community. Industry perception suggests that this might not be the case and that there is a continuing need for Government to be conscious of this requirement.

The submission concludes with recommendations for:

- a. A recognised partnership between government and industry.
- b. Legislation to be progressed in partnership with industry.
- c. The National Aviation Security Program to be updated.
- d. CTFR be recast in partnership with industry.
- e. Recognising the importance of cooperative working arrangements between responsible agencies.
- f. Regular intelligence updates.

A recognised partnering and consultative arrangement between government and industry are the two most important principles that will allow an enduring and mutual trust between government and major stakeholders to flourish.

Cairns Port Authority operates both an international airport and an international seaport. We have an enduring interest to put in place recognised aviation and maritime security standards that will allow us to provide a 'best practice' level of safety and security to domestic and international travellers. The best cooperative effort will allow government and industry to work together to target the criminal and the terrorist while affording safe passage to genuine travellers.