7 May 2020

Public hearing into the *Aviation Transport Security Amendment (Security Controlled Airports) Regulations 2019*
CANBERRA

Opening Statement

- I thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear today and for the opportunity to speak to the Aviation Transport Security Regulations. I will make a very short statement outlining the effects and drivers of the new Regulations.

- Following the 2017 disrupted Sydney terrorist plot, the Inspector of Transport Security (ITS) undertook a review of security arrangements at Australia's airports.

- The Inspector made a number of recommendations aimed at improving our aviation security regulatory regime. The Regulations in question directly respond to recommendations from that review.

- The Regulations change the screening threshold, moving to one based on aircraft seats as opposed to aircraft weight. This better reflects the current threat environment, recognising the threat to crowded places, and considering aircraft as 'crowded places in the sky'.

- Following the ITS review, the Department undertook a series of risk assessments and developed a refined model for airport categorisation in which smaller, lower risk airports would not be subject to disproportionate security requirements, and where airports with significant passenger numbers wold be required to screen those passengers and their baggage.

- The nature of today's proceedings as a public hearing means I am limited in what I can share about our risk assessment work; however, the Regulations give effect to this model and result in better security outcomes across the airport network to ensure the integrity of the aviation system as a whole.

- There have been some changes to the number and types of airports captured in the airport tier model since the Department last appeared before the Committee. If I may take a moment to explain this in practice:

  o We have overlaid the ITS review recommendations with a passenger number component, meaning the threshold for screening is now also considered in the context of how many passengers transit an airport on a yearly basis.

  o This means that fewer airports are required to screen than was previously noted.

  o As it stands today, there are currently 172 security controlled airports in Australia

  o Under the new Regulations 58 of those will be required to screen passengers and their baggage

- o If the Regulations are disallowed, 61 airports will be required to screen passengers and their baggage

- o The new Regulations require four regional airports to commence security screening operations; however, the new model under the Regulations also enables seven regional airports to cease security screening.

- o The four airports which will begin screening also process many more passengers on an annual basis than the seven airports which will cease screening.

- o The new regulations means both a better security outcome – more passengers screened – and a better regulatory outcome – with fewer airports required to conduct screening.

- I welcome the committee's questions about the Regulations.