

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT
INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT AND MITIGATION OF AIRCRAFT NOISE**

15 APRIL 2024

OPENING STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN ALEX PASSERINI

<CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY>

Good afternoon, Chair and Committee members. We welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee.

My name is Alex Passerini, I'm Qantas' Chief Technical Pilot. I operate the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner from Australia to ports including London, Rome, New York, Johannesburg, Tokyo and Santiago. I have been operating commercial aircraft for more than 30 years.

I am joined by my colleagues Murray Adams (Qantas' Head of Fuel and Operations Efficiency) and Peter Strub (Qantas' Head of Sustainable Operations).

Aviation plays a critical role in connecting Australian communities – especially those in rural, regional and remote Australia – and makes an important economic contribution.

The Qantas Group alone helps to generate more than one per cent of gross domestic product in Australia and more than 170,000 Australian jobs through total economic contribution and economic contribution of Qantas Group facilitated tourism.

In the State of Queensland where we meet today, tourists carried by the Qantas Group in 2022-23 contributed 21,630 jobs and \$2.5 billion in value to regional Queensland. Indeed, regional Queensland accounts for almost half of the total facilitated tourism value added in regional Australia by the Qantas Group.

The Qantas Group acknowledges government and community concerns about aircraft noise and continues to pursue procedural efficiencies supported by the latest innovations in flight planning and air traffic management to mitigate its effect.

The Qantas Group participates in community forums and working groups around the country where we listen to and contribute to the conversation on aviation-related issues, including noise.

Airports are critical national infrastructure. Our aim at all airports is to optimise the flow of air traffic, reduce emissions and ensure that Australia's airspace remains safe, secure and efficient.

As Australia is an International Civil Aviation Organization contracting state, the Qantas Group must consider noise around airports within the framework of ICAO's 'Balanced Approach to Aircraft Noise Management'. This consists of identifying noise at an airport and analysing the measures available to reduce it through:

- Reduction at the source;
- Land-use planning and management;
- Noise abatement operational procedures; and
- Aircraft operating restrictions.

It is important that the impact of some noise mitigation initiatives on efficiency and emissions are properly understood. Balance is critical.

While well-meaning, attempts to address noise concerns and mitigation often result in inefficient flight paths and operating procedures that lead to increased track miles, higher fuel burn and emissions, which work directly against the sustainability objectives of the industry that benefit the broader community.

Qantas is a global leader in research and deployment of advanced navigation procedures that can help balance noise, environment and airport utilisation. The current jet transport fleet, including that of our competitors, have had significant capability for the past 20 years that, unfortunately, remains largely dormant and under-utilised. This is a source of frustration for us and industry.

The Qantas Group encourages the Committee to work with airlines, and aviation sector stakeholders more broadly, to fully understand the relationship between noise and emissions, and to ensure that the economic and environmental impact of noise mitigation measures are considered appropriately when making their recommendations.

In our view, the most effective way of reducing aircraft noise at the source is continual renewal of aircraft fleet types. Modern aircraft are markedly quieter than prior generations, and investment in new aircraft will continue to play a significant role in the management of aircraft noise.

The Qantas Group has a major fleet renewal program in place which represents the largest and most significant fleet order in Australia aviation history - with deliveries already underway and continuing for at least the next decade. On average the Group will take delivery of a new aircraft every three weeks for the next few years.

These state-of-the-art aircraft include the Airbus A320NEO family, the Airbus A220-300, the Boeing 787-9, 787-10 and the Airbus A350-1000 which will deliver a range of benefits such as lower emissions and improved mechanical reliability, and importantly, **up to a 50 per cent reduction in noise footprint.**

Jetstar has now taken delivery of ten Airbus A321neo LR's that **have a significantly smaller noise footprint area** and are fitted with CFM Leap 1A engines that burn up to 20 per cent less fuel than Jetstar's earlier A321 aircraft.

Qantas has also commenced the retirement of its Boeing 717 fleet which is being replaced by new Airbus A220-300 aircraft over the next three to four years. We have two of 29 already in service.

The A220 aircraft offer longer-range capability allowing for more point-to-point flying within our regional network across Australia, approximately 25 per cent fewer CO2 emissions per seat, up to 50 per cent noise footprint reduction compared with previous generation aircraft and around 40 per cent less nitrogen oxide emissions than industry standards.

Thank you and we welcome your questions.