

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

**INQUIRY INTO DEVELOPMENTS IN AVIATION SECURITY
SINCE ITS JUNE 2004 REPORT 400: REVIEW OF AVIATION
SECURITY IN AUSTRALIA**

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE SUBMISSION

1. Introduction

1.1 The Australian Federal Police (AFP) welcomes the opportunity to provide the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (the Committee) with information on issues relevant to aviation security in Australia.

1.2 As the specific terms of reference directly relate to the responsibilities of the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS), this submission provides an update of AFP-related aviation security issues since the AFP's submission to the Committee's last inquiry on this subject (September 2003).

2. Overview of AFP Role and Function

2.1 The AFP is the major instrument of Commonwealth law enforcement. Its role is to enforce Commonwealth criminal law and protect Commonwealth and national interests from crime in Australia and overseas. The AFP is Australia's primary international law enforcement and policing representative and the chief source of advice to the Australian Government on policing issues.

2.2 At the time of the previous submission, the Australian Protective Service (APS) was an operating division of the AFP existing under its own legislation. As of 1 July 2004 it became part of the AFP (AFP Protective Service – AFP-PS) with its functions, along with other AFP functions, set out in section 8 of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979*.

2.3 Under section 37(2) of the *Australian Federal Police (AFP) Act 1979*, the AFP receives a Ministerial Direction that outlines the Government's priorities and expectations for the AFP for a given period. On 31 August 2004 the Minister for Justice and Customs issued a Ministerial Direction requiring the AFP to, among other priorities, focus on 'providing for the security of Australian air travellers and the aviation industry through the deployment of Air Security Officers on selected domestic and international flights and through the provision of a preventative and intelligence-driven Counter-Terrorist First Response capacity at major Australian airports.'

3. AFP Role and Function in Aviation Security

3.1 At a broad level the Committee will be aware that the AFP, as the Commonwealth Government's primary criminal investigative agency, is involved in investigations of breaches of Commonwealth laws. This includes the investigation of

referrals from the Australian Customs Service under the *Customs Act 1901* and the *Crimes Act 1914* at airports and other locations.

3.2 In terms of aviation security, the role of DOTARS is to provide the framework for preventative aviation security measures, while the AFP's role focuses on the provision of certain protective security-related services, incident response and incident management. DOTARS and AFP share the objective of strengthening the links between the preventative security, incident management and incident response elements of the overall aviation security system.

3.3 The *Aviation Transport Security Act and Regulations*, which came into effect on 10 March 2005, has introduced Security Controlled Airports. These include the 39 previously regulated airports, and 146 previously unregulated regional airports which are referred to as 'new entry airports'. It is these 'new entry airports' that are the target of the Government's *Securing Our Regional Skies* package of measures announced in mid-2004. The number of regulated airports may vary over time, reflecting changes in Regular Passenger Transport services provided by the aviation industry.

3.4 The key elements of the AFP's aviation security role are:

- the Air Security Officer Program (ASO);
- the Counter Terrorist First Response (CTFR) capability;
- the CTFR Regional Rapid Deployment Team capability; and
- the Protective Security Liaison Officer (PSLO) Network
- Airport Security Controllers (yet to be implemented).

The Air Security Officer (ASO) Program

3.5 As part of the Australian Government response to the events of September 11 2001 the Prime Minister announced the deployment of Air Security Officers on Australian domestic flights. The program is designed to provide threat deterrence and public reassurance to air travellers. It provides a discreet anti-hijacking capability for Australian civil aviation, placing armed Air Security Officers onboard aircraft. This involves both random and intelligence-led placement of armed Air Security Officers on commercial flights operated by Australian registered airlines on certain domestic and international flights (both into and out of Australia).

3.6 The APS was tasked with implementing the operational aspects of the program while policy responsibility lay with DOTARS. International operations commenced in late December 2003, when agreement was reached for ASOs to be deployed on flights between Australia and Singapore. Deployments between Australia and the US commenced in May 2004 following the exchange of Diplomatic Notes between Australia and the US. The Attorney-General's Department (AGD), AFP, Customs, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and DOTARS are continuing to explore options for further extending international ASO deployments with a number of other priority countries.

Counter Terrorist First Response (CTFR)

3.7 At the time of the last AFP submission to this Committee, the APS and AFP were in the process of reviewing the CTFR capability in consultation with the aviation industry, as a result of an independent review of the program in late 2002 led by Mr Rex Stevenson AO (the Stevenson Review). The Stevenson Review had supported the concept of CTFR at major airports but found that modifications were required to ensure relevance in the new threat environment.

3.8 After considering the Stevenson Review recommendations the Government directed the CTFR capability be recast from general deterrence patrolling to a capability that is intelligence-driven, preventative, proactive and nationally consistent. The AFP has been working actively with the aviation industry to effect this change.

3.9 Substantial progress has been made, resulting in the development and piloting of a new operational concept for the CTFR program. A successful trial was conducted at Sydney Airport and the aviation industry has agreed to adopt the model as the basis for new CTFR operational plans and new agreements at each airport where the capability exists. The AFP aims to fully implement these changes before the end of 2005.

4.0 To achieve the Government's direction to recast the CTFR capability to one that is intelligence-driven, preventative, proactive and nationally consistent, the following initiatives are currently being effected:

- **Intelligence driven.** The AFP has established the PSLO Network at each CTFR airport and has more recently restructured the AFP's Intelligence portfolio to include a section dedicated to Aviation Intelligence to support the CTFR capability and ASO program.
- **Preventative and Proactive.** The new CTFR model changes the operational delivery of the CTFR function. Whereas the previous CTFR model was reactive in nature, relying heavily upon a general visible patrolling presence delivering a deterrence effect, the new CTFR model places significantly greater emphasis on deterrence activities and focuses on the prevention of terrorist activity as an outcome of CTFR. From the existing resource base, deterrence will be enhanced through a more prominent, highly visible and overt presence, a discreet plain clothes presence at larger airports, and targeted activities based on intelligence.
- **Nationally Consistent.** The aviation industry has agreed to the application of the new CTFR model nationally, noting its ability to be appropriately modified to meet local conditions and each airport's Transport Security Plan. The relationship between the Australian Government Agency Security Committees at airports and the Australian Government Transport Security Policy Committee (AGASC) is to identify issues, develop policy approaches to, and implement decisions relating to national consistency on aviation security including CTFR. The AFP is represented on all agency security committees and the AGASC.

Regional Rapid Deployment Teams (RRDT)

3.9 As an additional measure focussing on regional aviation security, a CTFR Regional Rapid Deployment Team (RRDT) capability was introduced under the *Securing Our Regional Skies* initiative. The RRDT initiative enables the AFP to provide a rapidly deployable CTFR capability and to undertake highly visible operations at any Security Controlled Airport. Teams consist of eight AFP-PS officers and include an Explosive Detection Canine team and a Bomb Appraisal Officer.

3.10 RRDT deployments will occur on both a threat response basis and as routine pre-planned exercise deployments. The former will occur as short notice deployments triggered by intelligence indicating an increased threat to a regional airport or airports, and the latter designed to practice deployment protocols, familiarise other stakeholders (including State/Territory police and airport operators) with the RRDT capability and provide an active deterrence against terrorist threats to regional aviation.

3.11 It should be noted these teams are not designed to deploy after an incident has occurred – it is a pre-emptive capability designed to deter terrorism and resolution of a terrorist incident remains the responsibility of the State/Territory police in accordance with the National Counter Terrorism Plan.

3.12 The AFP has established an agreed set of Liaison Protocols with each State/Territory police force which outlines the process required for effective coordination. The first RRDT commenced operations from Melbourne airport in January 2005 and as of 1 July 2005, teams will be operational and deployable from Brisbane, Sydney and Perth airports.

The Protective Security Liaison Officer (PSLO) Network

3.13 The PSLO Network, announced by the Government in late 2003, currently has 18 AFP Federal Agents at the 11 CTFR Airports to facilitate national security information and intelligence sharing between agencies and to ensure that operational functions relating to Australian Government national security responsibilities at airports are integrated as effectively and efficiently as possible.

3.14 To support this initiative the AFP recently restructured its Intelligence portfolio to include a section dedicated to Aviation Intelligence, also supporting the CTFR capability and ASO program.

3.15 In addition to the facilitation of intelligence sharing, the PSLO Network also monitors national security related activities at airports, provides advice to aviation security stakeholders and is the AFP's point of contact for industry participants and airport tenants that may come into possession of information concerning aviation security. PSLOs play a key coordinating and strategic role in the work of the Australian Government Agency Security Committees at major airports.

3.16 The PSLO Network continues to evolve within its mandate. Favourable comment has been given by stakeholders in relation to the information sharing which has been established by the AFP since the introduction of the PSLO initiative. The network will continue to develop improved practices and procedures to streamline the

flow of information between the AFP, other Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies and industry participants.

4. Recent Aviation Issues

4.1 The Committee will be aware that the Australian Government announced on 7 June 2005 that it will act immediately to further tighten security at Australia's major airports to address community concerns about the level of crime at these critical international and domestic gateways. This is the subject of a review of security at Australian airports that will be carried out by the Rt Hon Sir John Wheeler JP, DL who has previously conducted a major review of security at the United Kingdom's major airports, with an emphasis on Heathrow.

4.2 The review will examine the threat from serious and organised crime at airports, the integration of ground-based security and law enforcement arrangements, and the adequacy of the existing security requirements. The report is expected to be available to the Government by early September 2005.

4.3 Amongst the measures to be immediately taken, and of direct relevance to the AFP submission to the Committee, is the appointment of an Australian Government Airport Security Controller at every CTFR airport: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin, Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Canberra, Cairns, Alice Springs and Gold Coast. The controllers will be senior AFP officers and will co-ordinate the aviation security and investigative effort of the Australian Government law enforcement and border control agencies at each airport along with private sector and State/Territory coordination.

Airport Security Controllers

4.4 The establishment of senior AFP Airport Security Controllers (ASC) at the 11 CTFR Airports will substantially strengthen the integration of aviation security and law enforcement arrangements. These positions have been advertised across Australia on 25 June 2005.

4.5 The ASC will perform a critical role in delivering the outcomes of intended Government aviation security related initiatives at airports with the clear authority when necessary to coordinate relevant security and law enforcement resources within the airport precinct at a strategic and operational level.

4.6 The AFP will formalise ASC arrangements between agencies and airport operators to clearly define their role and function.