

SENATE ESTIMATES HEARING 22 MAY 2018

Senator COLBECK: I want to ask some questions about the implementation of the new systems in Hobart. I'll start with the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's report into complaints, following the introduction of the new flight paths over Hobart. Have you accepted the recommendations in the ombudsman's report?

Mr Harfield: Yes, we've accepted all 13 recommendations.

Senator COLBECK: How can the community be assured that all of those will be implemented? What measures have you got in place to demonstrate that, particularly community consultation?

Mr Harfield: The assurance that can be given is that our response to the noise ombudsman's report said that we had accepted the recommendations and that we had actually conducted our own internal systemic review, which was completed in December and which we've posted up on our website and given to the community in Tasmania. It shows that the actions that we're taking out of that are very consistent with the recommendations made by the noise ombudsman. The noise ombudsman will now publish those recommendations, with our actions associated with them, and they'll be tracked on their website, as well as on the Airservices website.

Senator COLBECK: In the report, the ombudsman said that it was her view that Airservices did not consult with the community prior to implementing the paths. She also said that Airservices did not provide her with the evidence that it had undertaken an assessment of the social impact on the community, as it is required to do under the EPBC Act. Do you accept those findings?

Mr Harfield: We've been on the public record, prior to the noise ombudsman making her findings, stating that we did not do the consultation appropriately in Hobart. That was actually admitted in October last year. That was an own goal by us that we didn't do it appropriately before implementing the flight paths. As a result, that's where we picked up a number of complaints and, subsequently, the review has occurred.

Senator COLBECK: Is that an admission that you're in breach of the act?

Mr Harfield: No, Senator. What we didn't do was the appropriate consultation. The issues around assessing the social impact elements is that we need to work through to an extent—for example, the noise ombudsman's report referred to the fact that we didn't take into account that there had been bushfires through that particular area. We're trying to work out how that impact is associated with the flight path change. It's actually quite a broad definition, but we have not breached the act.

Senator COLBECK: According to what I've got in front of me, and as I said to you in my question, you had not provided her with evidence that you had undertaken an assessment of the social impact on the community. There's nothing about a bushfire in that.

Mr Harfield: No, but that was the example given in the report of what was meant by 'not assessing the social impact'. We didn't provide the evidence; however, our assessment takes that into account; it just wasn't explicit— not that we took into account the bushfires but that social impact. As we said, we did not then do the appropriate consultation before we did the implementation.

Senator COLBECK: So you're accepting that you didn't provide her with the evidence but you see that as being different to having undertaken the assessment?

Mr Harfield: Yes. Our environmental assessments are conducted in accordance with the guidelines, the provisions of the EPBCA Act. Because if we, for example, deem the changes to be significant, we need to refer it to the minister under the EPBCA Act. This was not assessed as being significant. As a result of that, we also didn't do the right stakeholder plan and do the right appropriate consultation before implementing the change.

Senator COLBECK: In the context of the implementation of the new scheme, there's a report in The Australian on 19 May which refers to a dramatic spike in safety breaches, including loss of separation on four separate incidents, and two loss of separation and one loss of separation assurance incidents related to the new paths, and 22 safety incidents related to failures to comply with the new routes. Can you give us an explanation around those claims, please?

Mr Harfield: Absolutely. It's easier to work with a diagram. If I can have that tabled, I've got multiple copies for all the senators that might explain it.

Senator COLBECK: That might assist.

CHAIR: Just wait. It will take us two seconds to evaluate that and then you can refer to it in the Hansard. Do any senators have any objection to the tabling of the map and plan to assist in this? There being no objection, we'll table that.

Mr Harfield: So if you refer to the diagram, I would like to highlight the area in the yellow dashed box, which has got Copping and Denali there. That's the area that is in dispute, the implementation of the flight path. Where you see the red lines is where the flight path used to be. It used to be a spread. It wasn't consistent and that was before September 2017. The white line there is the flight path that was implemented. We implemented what is called a standard terminal arrival route, which provides consistency for the flight rather than being relatively splayed. The issue is although it is in the vicinity of where the other flight paths are, there has been much more of a concentration because it allows for predictability and sustainability and for improving safety.

If you go up to the north of Hobart where you've got the red dashed box, that's where the air safety incidents reported on 19 May occurred. There were only two losses of separation during the period that wasn't before as reported. Those losses of separation were between the same company. One was with the aircraft on descent and the other was an aircraft on climb. In the first incident, the aircraft got no closer than five kilometres with nearly 1,000 feet between the aircraft diverging. In the second incident, the aircraft were no closer than eight kilometres and diverging, but they weren't associated with the change of the flight path we made earlier. We continue to monitor the safety of any airspace, regardless of whether it's Hobart, and sometimes when you do change things there is what we call heightened implementation risk. However, the way that those incidents were reported is not correct in the assertions that were made.

Senator COLBECK: So what do you attribute the loss of separation to then?

Mr Harfield: The loss of separation in both cases was when the pilot didn't meet an actual height requirement that is actually specified in the approach plate, which most

aircraft for whatever reason—and we're in contact with the company to make sure it's rectified. On both occasions, they released the aircraft from a height restriction and they busted the height restriction. That was picked up and rectified at the time.

Senator COLBECK: So, there's some company involvement in this process?

Mr Harfield: Yes, with all safety incidents there is—we have letters of agreement with all the airlines and airspace users and, when there is an incident, we actually work with airlines and airspace users to make sure that we can make things safer. On both of these occasions, these were classed as pilot attributable. It wasn't air traffic control related. It was a mistake made, but we continue to work to make sure the system remains safe.

Senator COLBECK: I think we're at cross-purposes. I took it that you were attributing that there was a—let's call it a mission. It's probably not the right word, but something that the airline had done which permitted or caused the pilot to make the decision. That's not what you're saying?

Mr Harfield: No, not at all.

Senator COLBECK: The fact that they were from the same company really has no relevance. In the broader technical scheme of things, it's just a coincidence that they were two aircraft from the same company that were involved in each of those incidents.

Mr Harfield: Correct.

Senator COLBECK: It doesn't change the fundamental elements of the incidents—or not?

Mr Harfield: It doesn't change the fact there was a still a loss of separation event, and we continue to treat it as seriously, regardless of a range of what we call separation standards. They're the minimum distances that you can allow aircraft to come together. They've got buffers and buffers associated with them so that, as soon as you infringe the separation standard, you don't get into close proximity, and we take every one of those seriously, regardless of whether the infringement is one centimetre, a mile or two miles. As soon as there's an infringement, we investigate fully and make sure that we make the rectifications that are required.

Senator COLBECK: So, your attribution to cause at this point—and I say 'at this point' advisedly—is around implementation of the new system and familiarity with compliance with the new system?

Mr Harfield: I wouldn't characterise it in that particular way. The two incidents were what we would class as an operational deviation where there's been a failure to comply with the rules which has led to a loss of separation event. We get those loss of separation events in other parts of the country—it's not just in Hobart—and it's to do with requirements. We do see a heightened risk of those when there is a change in the system—when it's a flight route procedure et cetera, there is a heightened risk associated with a potential for a failure to comply.

Senator COLBECK: Which goes effectively to my next question which is about evidence that you might have that the new system is safer and more efficient—but that's more to do with its broader operational parameters, I suspect.

Mr Harfield: Yes. We've put in what's called a standard terminal arrival route into Hobart and what they call standard instrument departures, which are applied at all major aerodromes, and we've been on a pathway at some of our other locations, such

as Rockhampton and Mackay recently. It's where we're seeing traffic growth and where, as you've seen from that map, previously, the aircraft have tracked from certain points and come down, and they've just converged on the point with that white triangle just south of Dunalley. As traffic has increased down in Hobart, we need to actually put in more regularity and systemise the approach there to manage the increase in traffic. One of the reasons for having that predictability is that it allows the aircrafts to be managed more efficiently and it allows them to get into a stabilised approach to land much sooner, and they can set up in a very busy time for the pilots. What we have seen since the new flight path and the stars have been implemented is a reduction in what we call 'go arounds'. That's when the aircraft goes around because it is in an unstable approach. We've seen a reduction in the number for the corresponding period 12 months prior. So we're seeing evidence that the system integrity and safety is improving, with improved efficiency from the systemisation. That indicates that that's where we need to continue—otherwise, we'll get into a situation where air traffic growth for Hobart will be restricted.

Senator COLBECK: So you do see there are some improvements from the changes?

Mr Harfield: Absolutely.

Senator COLBECK: And, there are, obviously, higher levels of safety and efficiency from what you're implementing?

Mr Harfield: Hobart is an area that is continuing to grow and the air traffic's growing but it's something we have to look at across the entire country because we're experiencing year-on-year growth of three to four per cent in air traffic continually. We're expecting to see a 60 per cent increase in traffic over the next 15 years and we've got to continue to maintain the safety and efficiency of the system. That doesn't take into account that, with this change in implementing it, we made a mistake at the start and didn't do the appropriate consultation. We're not taking away from that. Now, going forward, we're going back out to the community. One of my executive managers was down there in the last three days talking to the community as we actually work to make further improvements with this particular track. We're working with the community and consulting, pushing that track further east away, which requires air space changes and a number of things. But we're working through that with the community as we speak.

Senator COLBECK: You would refute the assertion in The Australian that few if any of the safety or efficiency benefits have been realised as part of the program?

Mr Harfield: Yes.

Senator COLBECK: And you haven't reactivated any of the other navigational aids or changed any of the other approaches?

Mr Harfield: There is a ground based navigation aid called a VHF omni-direction range, currently known as a VOR. It is a ground based aid that is at the airport. We've had to turn that and relocate it due to the runway extension, because of where it was. That has been relocated and now we're working through its future because of our move to satellite based navigation—and having a backup navaid network—and what role it continues to play. But it was turned off and moved as a result of the runway extension.

Senator COLBECK: Has it been reactivated?

Mr Harfield: I have to take it on notice, because there's a time you have it on and you're testing versus when you have it operational, and I'm not quite across that.

Senator COLBECK: Are there any proposals to provide noise relief to the residents, apart from relocation of the flight path?

Mr Harfield: We made a change in March, after the initial change in September, where we adjusted the flight path to where it is today. We're continuing to work with the community to find where we can actually get relief, while we work through the longer term proposal. I'm really reluctant to just sit there and say, 'Yes, we'll do that,' because we've obviously got to measure up the safety versus the benefit, and I also don't want to go through and do exactly what we did before and not consult appropriately with any change.

Senator COLBECK: While you're finalising that process in Hobart, the implementation of the system in Launceston has been put on hold; is that correct?

Mr Harfield: Yes. We're making sure that we get our community consultation and process right before we go and do something there.

Senator COLBECK: But it's not going to change the fact that the new system will be implemented?

Mr Harfield: At some stage we will do it, otherwise you'll restrict capacity of the airport.

CHAIR: I'm sorry; we're going to interrupt, but we're going to come back to it. We're going to go to Senator McKim and then we'll come back to this.

Senator McKIM: Good afternoon. I wanted to go back to the issue that Senator Colbeck was asking about: the change in flight paths to Hobart International Airport. In relation to the diagram you've tabled, can you confirm, firstly, that that doesn't show all of the previous flight paths and about eighty per cent of previous flight paths actually aren't shown on that?

Mr Harfield: This is only showing the flight path that is the one that the community has raised.

Senator McKIM: So visual and VOR paths aren't shown on this.

Mr Harfield: Not all of them, no.

Senator McKIM: Are any of them shown on this map?

Mr Harfield: The original one that we're talking about is those red lines. Those red lines are the original flight path prior to September 2017. It is the one to which we made the adjustment that the community has—

Senator McKIM: Okay, but visual and VOR paths for this period are not—

Mr Harfield: No, this is not trying to show all the flight paths.

Senator McKIM: Okay. Didn't the ANAO report highlight that this is misleading when shown at community consultation?

Mr Harfield: They said that a previous chart that we have—not this particular chart; this chart has been made just for this particular hearing—

Senator McKIM: Was that previous chart one that didn't show the visual and VOR paths, and was that why the ANAO report highlighted it as misleading?

Mr Harfield: One of the charts that was used could have been put as misleading because it didn't accurately display—what actually occurred in that chart, if my memory serves me correctly, is about how, as you can see, for example, the display of the red lines that are there. It's the same flight path, but each individual aircraft is flying it differently. It was displayed as one single line similar to that white line and it did not represent appropriately the spread of where the aircraft were flying.

Senator McKIM: And your contention would be that you have now represented that correctly.

Mr Harfield: We're ensuring that the information that we are providing to the community is more accurate than what was there before.

Senator McKIM: Have you provided this to the community?

Mr Harfield: No. We did this morning on questions that we could have got today referencing the safety incidents from the article of 19 May.

Senator McKIM: By the way, do you intend to provide this to the community as part of the consultation?

Mr Harfield: Probably not this particular chart, but a chart that would depend on what we're actually trying to consult with the community on.

Senator McKIM: I've just sent it down to my office, so it's fair to say they're going to have a look at it very soon if they haven't already. I just want to ask about safety first. We all want to see safe airports; I'm sure we can all agree on that. Can you just confirm, firstly, there were no loss of separation incidents at Hobart airport in the nine years prior to the changes?

Mr Harfield: No, I can't confirm that. I would say that there were; however, I'll have to take that on notice.

Senator McKIM: Could you provide that on notice to the committee, please.

Mr Harfield: Absolutely.

Senator McKIM: I'm talking about the five months since the new paths were implemented up to 5 February. Do you accept there were three loss of separation assurance incidents in those five months?

Mr Harfield: Say the dates again?

Senator McKIM: The five months since the implementation of the new paths?

Mr Harfield: We're looking at from September through to January?

Senator McKIM: I think it's February actually?

Mr Harfield: No, I don't think so. There were two losses of separation and one loss of separation assurance event during that time.

Senator McKIM: Two losses of separation and one loss of separation assurance?

Mr Harfield: Correct.

Senator McKIM: There were no other incidents in that time that were related to the STAR routes?

Mr Harfield: There were a number of operational deviations. That chart that you have there—in that red box up the top to the north of Hobart—is where the incidents have occurred.

Senator McKIM: Those are from 1 September 2017—sorry, was that the date that the changes were implemented?

Mr Harfield: Yes. If you look at the key on that chart it says: 'The location of the nine operational deviations and two loss of separation occurrences between 1 September 2017 and 18 May this year'.

Senator McKIM: And loss of separation assurance, that fits—

Mr Harfield: That's a separate category, which is in a similar area. So the loss of separation assurance incident was at the control. Two aeroplanes were departing and, when they departed, although the aircraft were separated, the plan did not continue to assure the separation until the controller stepped in. They're very different from an actual loss of separation event.

Senator McKIM: Thanks for that. How does that compare to perhaps a similar period of time prior to the changes?

Mr Harfield: Prior to the changes, we did a comparison. We had a look at the same period of time but 12 months prior. There were not the two loss of separation events or a loss of separation assurance event during that time but, as I was saying to Senator Colbeck, we did see a reduction in the number of go-arounds.

Senator McKIM: Post the implementation of the change?

Mr Harfield: Post the implementation. In the incidents we saw beforehand, we saw more go-arounds than we did in this period after the implementation.

Senator McKIM: Do you have the figures for that?

Mr Harfield: Off the top of my head, it was 27 prior and 22 after; it was a difference of five.

Senator McKIM: So a reduction of five for the same period in the previous year?

Mr Harfield: Correct.

Senator McKIM: Do you have the data for the same period in the previous years?

Mr Harfield: We can do that. I don't have it off the top of my head, but we can provide that.

Senator McKIM: Maybe going back five years, if that's data that you keep. It's your assertion that the changes have made the Hobart airport safer—is that right?

Mr Harfield: They improved the safety of flying in and out of Hobart airport, yes.

Senator McKIM: I just want to go to some evidence you gave the committee earlier this year. You said that Airservices had corrected the Hobart flight path as much as you possibly could and that it will be reimplemented—it will be as close as they can get to the previous flight path.

Mr Harfield: Sorry, Senator?

Senator McKIM: This is your evidence, Mr Harfield, to this committee earlier this year. I'm advised that you said that Airservices have corrected the Hobart flight path as much as you possibly could and that will be reimplemented. It will be as close as they can get to the previous flight path. Do you think you've delivered on that commitment?

Mr Harfield: Yes. You said, 'As close as we could to the original flight path.' If you have a look at this chart again, the red lines are the ones that were originally before 17 September. The white line that goes down through that yellow box is where the flight path was moved to in March this year and is as close as we could get back to the original

flight paths, taking into account the improvements that we're trying to make in the system. We understood that this is just an interim measure, and we are now working with the community on a longer term. The idea is that one of the solutions—the next step, longer term thing—we're looking at is pushing that white line further east.

Senator McKIM: Further east, so across—

Mr Harfield: Hopefully, over the bay.

Senator McKIM: When you say 'over the bay', do you mean the bay on the eastern side of the peninsula?

Mr Harfield: Correct. Over—

Senator McKIM: Out over the water?

Mr Harfield: Yes. The reason it's taking longer is we actually have to change the airspace arrangements there and introduce more controlled airspace to capture those flights.

Senator McKIM: Where would it come across the peninsula in that scenario?

Mr Harfield: I couldn't tell you at this point. That's what we're in consultation on: trying to work out what's the best solution.

Senator McKIM: No worries. I want to ask about your accelerate program. Do you think your accelerate program has had an effect on the changes made to the Hobart flight path?

Mr Harfield: I can actually say that they haven't. The reason I can say that categorically is that, when this Hobart occurrence occurred and we didn't do the consultation, we did a systemic review. The reason we did a systemic review is that the issues resulting in inappropriate consultation with the community were exactly the same to a change that was made at the Gold Coast prior to the accelerate program, which was also very similar to changes on a trial that we did in Perth—it was the same thing. We're seeing the same area. During the accelerate program, that function was untouched, relatively—a couple of people changed but, ostensibly, it was untouched. Part of the review is that we had to make changes, and it was one area where we've subsequently done a lot of work. However, I can say that it wasn't as a result of the accelerate program; it was probably because we hadn't applied that program that we continue to make the same mistakes.

Senator McKIM: Could you say that last sentence please.

Mr Harfield: In some ways, we would've liked to have taken a closer look during the accelerate program because we were still making the same mistakes as we did previously. That's one of the reasons why we haven't acted with haste, despite the community wanting further changes because we need to work through this properly rather than continue to make the same mistakes.

Senator McKIM: I'm happy to hear that you intend to work through this properly. The community's a bit past wanting good consultation and just wants a rectification of the flight path but, nevertheless—at least the community that's been in touch with me—do you have a consultation plan?

Mr Harfield: Absolutely. One of my executive general managers has been down in Hobart over the last three days meeting with councils, community leaders and working out and highlighting what our forward plans are for community consultation as we work towards to rectifying the flight path—

Senator McKIM: You're consulting on the consultation—is that what you're telling me?

Mr Harfield: Absolutely.

Senator McKIM: It's been put to me that workload stress on Hobart controllers, resulting from the change— do you accept, by the way, that there has been an increased stress on Hobart controllers as a result of the change to the—

Mr Harfield: No, I don't.

Senator McKIM: You don't?

Mr Harfield: No, we're not seeing any indications internally, or I haven't seen any reports to the states. With any change that we conduct, whether it's procedures or anywhere, there is a changing environment and there is a period of time where controllers, like anyone, have to work change as a new system, and we continue to monitor that.

Senator McKIM: Have you done any internal review that found, at least in part, that the new flight paths were neither safer nor more efficient?

Mr Harfield: Not that I'm aware of.

Senator McKIM: Can I ask you to take that on notice, and maybe you can have a look?

Mr Harfield: Yes, we will, but nothing's come to our attention that it's not safer. But whether there's something in there—

Senator McKIM: That's all right. You've taken that on notice, Mr Harfield, and you can come back to the committee once you've had a look. Airlines weren't consulted about the change originally, were they?

Mr Harfield: I don't think that's correct. For the implementation of standard instrument departures and standard terminal arrival routes, we had a program. Hobart wasn't the only place. We'd been doing it in Rockhampton, Mackay and Hobart. We will do Launceston at some particular stage and, as I mentioned beforehand, we want to get this one right before we take the next step. That's been a publicly known program, and we would have been consulting with the airlines with that.

Senator McKIM: The evidence you're giving is that airlines were consulted about the change?

Mr Harfield: That's my understanding.

Senator McKIM: Is it your contention that air traffic control staff at Hobart were also thoroughly consulted about the change?

Mr Harfield: The air traffic control staff would have been consulted in our normal change process that we do for any procedures or air route changes within the operation.

Senator McKIM: All of them? Does that include all air traffic controllers or a part?

Mr Harfield: Technically, they wouldn't be operating under their licence if they weren't deemed to be competent or understand the changes that they shouldn't be—

Senator McKIM: No, I'm asking about the consultation.

Mr Harfield: There's a normal change process that we have in the operations. That would have been carried out.

Senator McKIM: I'm asking: did that normal change process involve consulting all air traffic control staff at Hobart about the change?

Mr Harfield: It would depend on your definition of 'consultation'. I'm not trying to be—

CHAIR: Mr Harfield, it's a pretty simple question. You've got X number of air traffic controllers; you've got a change coming down the pike; you have processes of consultation. The senator's question is quite clear.

Mr Harfield: No, no. The thing is that they would be made aware of the change, and they would have—

CHAIR: That's not consultation. The burden of his question is consultation.

Mr Harfield: So they would have been made aware through our normal operational change processes, and they would have had the ability to object to the change or raise any issues that they had with the change, which is our normal process—

Senator McKIM: After the change had been made?

Mr Harfield: No, Senator. Our requirements are that we do a safety assessment and people have the ability to raise issues associated with that safety assessment, and that's our normal operational change process.

Senator McKIM: That includes all air traffic controllers in Hobart?

Mr Harfield: There is an ability for all controllers—the reason I'm saying that is that I can't say that all controllers were applied, but it's available to them. I'd have to take it on notice to find what the process actually was.

CHAIR: Prior to you designing the architecture of the change—that is, when you're mulling over what you might or might not do, developing rules or internal regulations—there's a process?

Mr Harfield: Correct.

CHAIR: Someone's in charge of that—Fred, Betty or together. They're going to build this proposition to put to you which you'll either agree or disagree with as a change—right?

Mr Harfield: Correct.

CHAIR: Were any of the air traffic controllers in Tasmania involved in those legs of the process, so leading up until the point where you go: 'Bang! This is the new way'?

Mr Harfield: The normal process is that somebody from Hobart would have been involved in that.

CHAIR: There we go.

Senator McKIM: I understand that to be true, but 'somebody' is obviously nowhere near all of the control staff at Hobart. Perhaps I could just ask you to take on notice how many of the air traffic control staff at Hobart were consulted and the nature of that consultation. Can you take that on notice?

Mr Harfield: Yes.

Senator McKIM: Thanks. I'm running a little bit short of time here, but I want to ask: is the new route designed specifically for regional airports, or is it based on a design that was created specifically for regional airports rather than capital city airports—because, of course, for some bizarre reason Hobart's classified as a regional airport not a capital city airport?

Mr Harfield: It's the same that is applied to both regional airports and capital city airports. It's the same thing—standard terminal arrival routes and standard instrument departures. Standard instrument departures can actually even occur at non-controlled aerodromes where air traffic control isn't. The design is that the pilot flying instrument

flight rules has a set path to depart and arrive at the airport, and it's agnostic about whether it's a capital city or not.

Senator McKIM: I'm aware my time's up, but, as I have other commitments in other committees, the chair's very kindly allowed me just a couple more questions. Was the new route design based on a trial at Albury Airport? If so, why was that, given that Albury's got a much lower level of traffic than Hobart and has almost no jet traffic?

Mr Harfield: No, it wasn't.

Senator McKIM: Isn't it the case that some air traffic controllers in Hobart actually made alternative suggestions that weren't accepted—

Mr Harfield: I'm unaware of that, but I'll take that on notice.

Senator McKIM: thanks—and also that workload stress on Hobart controllers actually was raised as part of a safety assessment by the tower supervisor at Hobart?

Mr Harfield: I'll take that on notice.

Senator McKIM: My final question: why don't you just go back to the way it was?

Mr Harfield: As you can see from that chart, it's very hard to go back to where it was because we're actually taking systemisation out of the system. The whole idea—

Senator McKIM: That's your choice, though, Mr Harfield, isn't it? No-one's standing over you making you do that.

Mr Harfield: The reason we put it in place, and one of the things that I'm very conscious of, is continuing to maintain the safety and efficiency of the flow of traffic into Hobart, to not restrict the traffic growth that is currently experienced in Hobart and should continue to be.

Senator McKIM: Just on that: on what basis are you suggesting that, if you hadn't made these changes, there would have been a restriction to traffic growth into Hobart?

Whose assertion is that, and on what foundation is that assertion based?

Mr Harfield: It is our experience around the country where we've seen traffic growth happen at regional locations where we haven't systemised the air traffic to ensure certainty and predictability of the flight paths. One of the big areas that we have with traffic growth is that, once you start getting delays into the system, it's actually showing that the system is no longer necessarily at its optimum. And, particularly when you get things like weather and other disruptive events, it is how you recover from that and keep the capacity up at the airport. The way that that occurs is systemising and having the right predictability and consistency in flight paths so that the pilot and controller all know exactly what is going on at any particular time. It also helps the flight crews manage their descent profiles and their arrivals in a very high workload situation. As we sit there and we continue to go through and we see growth, we have to be ahead of it. We can't wait for it to happen, because it's the one thing—

Senator McKIM: This has come from CASA, has it?

Mr Harfield: There was a review on, I think, either 16 or 17 February, an airspace review there that recommended—

Senator McKIM: From CASA?

Mr Harfield: It was from CASA, because they're the airspace regulator. It recommended standard terminal arrival routes. We have things in our corporate plan and also our

normal program of trying to improve the integrity of the airspace design across the country.

Senator McKIM: But not to implement SIDs or STARs. CASA never recommended implementing SIDs or STARs.

Mr Harfield: They recommended STARs into Tasmania as part of the aeronautical study.

Senator McKIM: At Hobart?

Mr Harfield: At Hobart, and we've seen it around the country. We've put SIDs and STARs into Rockhampton and Mackay as well as other ports as we've seen traffic grow.

Senator McKIM: Chair, I do have some more questions, but you have been very generous. I might try and pop back in a bit later.