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Airservices Australia

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To whom it may concern

**RE: OSCAR submission to Airservices Australia re Draft TOR v0.2 for the PIR for the Sunshine Coast Airport (Sunshine Coast Flight Path Changes Post Implementation Review)**

## Introduction

OSCAR is pleased to make this submission to Air Services Australia PIR process. OSCAR is a non-partisan and not-for-profit umbrella/peak organisation covering resident and community organisations on the Sunshine Coast and Noosa local government areas (LGAs) in South East Queensland.

The OSCAR aims as relating to support for member resident group associations as per the OSCAR mission statement includes the following: (the full Mission statement and objectives are available at: <http://www.oscar.org.au/about/> )

*OSCAR aims to support member organisations by:*

- 1. Advocating to local and state government and the public on policy issues that are of regional significance and of concern to our members;*
- 2. Acting to resolve issues of strategic or region-wide relevance that are referred by member organisations;*
- 3. Representing the member organisations on region-wide matters of interest to the community;*
- 4. Maintaining awareness and responsiveness through frequent and regular ordinary meetings and dialogue with member organisations; and*
- 5. Practising professional, honest and ethical conduct.*

It is on this basis that OSCAR makes this submission. Further, to understanding OSCAR's role in the Sunshine Coast Airport ongoing development, is that the Sunshine Coast airport is owned by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and under lease to Palisades. This means that all the ratepayers and residents of the Sunshine Coast and Noosa are impacted either financially or residentially by the Sunshine Coast Airport and its operations.

## Background

OSCAR notes:

### Relationships and structure of Air Services Australia (from the Airservices Aust. Website)

- Airservices Australia is an **Australian Government owned corporation**, responsible for providing safe, secure, efficient and environmentally responsible services to the aviation industry within the Australian Flight Information Region. Some of Airservices responsibilities include air traffic control, airways navigation and communication facilities, publishing aeronautical data and airport rescue and fire-fighting services.
- **Minister responsible:** Michael McCormack, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Deputy Prime Minister
- **Jurisdiction:** Civil Aviation Act 1988, Air Services Act 1995, Airspace Act 2007
- Airservices Australia has oversight of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman
- Airservices Australia is fully funded by the aviation industry

### Team working on the PIR (PIR s10)

- The Airservices Australia PIR team primarily consists of technical and managerial personnel
- There is considerable technical work involved
- There is industry involvement but does not appear to be any significant community representation

### Information included in the documentation provided for the PIR v0.2

- Purpose of the document (PIR s2) – to describe the terms of reference (ToR) for the PIR of the EIA and community information that supported the Sunshine Coast flight path changes that had been implemented
- OSCAR understands that ***safety is the most important priority and cannot be compromised.***
- the PIR v0.2 document includes the Objectives of the PIR (s4) with the comment that it had been developed following consultation with the ANO, SC Airport and the Sunshine Coast community.
- industry involvement is included so that other matters are taken into account when determining the PIR
- we acknowledge and congratulate the work of the ANO and associated recommendations (s5.1)
- we note that the document references the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (s7)
- we note the detailed reference to both the PIR process and scope with clear distinction of in scope and out of scope elements (s6.1, 6.1.1,, 6.1.2, 6.3)
- an extensive list of principles is included(s7)
- we note the section “Consideration of Community suggested alternatives”(s8)

OSCAR’s submission relates to the above points where maybe the saying “the devil is in the detail” possibly applies.

## **Key Issues with the information presented and what is NOT said.**

### **1. Membership of the Airservices Board and operations**

One assumes in the interests of transparency that all board members and those involved in the work of the PIR declare any financial or other interests they have in the aviation industry and any associated parties.

### **2. Reporting mechanism and decision-making process**

The TOR outlines the membership of the team conducting the PIR but makes no reference as to whom the decision makers are. OSCAR seeks advice as to who will be making the decisions-will it be: the team; the Board; industry representatives or some other configuration? To whom will the PIR team report? As this is not clear and in the interests of transparency and fairness to the whole community this needs to be clearly articulated.

A further issue relates to who is the Chair of this process? The community is seeking an independent chair as for example the Sunshine Coast Airport Community Aviation Forum has. This is not an unreasonable request. The role of an independent chair is just that – the chair is able to ask questions, seek clarification, consider fairness and ensure that all voices are heard and vested interests do not hijack the process.

OSCAR wishes to make it quite clear that it is not taking any particular “side” in any discussions relating to the specific topics to be considered, other than a genuine concern for safety of all and that the process is transparent with full disclosure by all parties. We accept the underlying premise that safety is a priority.

### **3. Relationships within Airservices Australia**

One could describe the relationships between industry and Airservices Australia as something along the lines of a “closed shop”. Understanding the absolute need for a relationship with industry particularly in the aviation sector and the aviation safety organisations, but one does question - where is the voice for the community in this whole structure?

### **4. Development of the objectives of the PIR process (S4)**

In the TOR v0.2, reference is made to their being input from the community to the setting of the objectives. Although not disagreeing with the set of Objectives we ask “*was this done through the exercise at the RSL in Maroochydore, where there were some community members in attendance and others on line?*” If so this process, although containing good presentations around the facts of flight paths, could not be considered as genuine engagement and not through any fault of the presenters, but the process of communicating with those on line.

For those on line it was basically a waste of some 4.5 hours as it was impossible to hear anything other than the presenter. We were not able to hear or participate in the discussion.

In Section 4 Objectives there is no reference as to how the objectives will be achieved, what and how outcomes will be measured and based on what criteria will they be measured and reported against.

## **5. Airservices Australia community engagement/public participation process and intent (s7)**

Throughout the document reference is made to Airservices Australia Community Engagement Framework and references to the work of the International Association of Public participation (IAP2). We congratulate Airservices Australia on having a statement about community engagement by the organisation. We note however, that the reference is predominantly to the IPA2 Public Participation Spectrum, and its progressive intent of public participation including the basic *Inform*, through *Consult* to *Involve*, *Collaborate* and *Empower*.

One of the Principles makes reference to the preparation and provision to the community of the engagement plan prior to commencing with formal community engagement activity. There is no time frame given for this activity –was the workshop in Maroochydore part of the formal engagement or a preliminary activity?

On further examination of the IPA2 information a critical section of their work relates to the 7 Core Values of the IAP2 organisation and process. Airservices Australia could be said to follow 6 of the 7 Core Values, however Core Value 5 has not been met. That Value is “*Public Participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate*”. OSCAR understands from reports from participants at the workshop (but which online participants could not be part of), that there was a call from participants for an independent Chair of the process.

## **6. Consideration of community suggested alternatives (s8)**

Section 8 refers to an existing process for investigating community suggested alternatives. There are 4 considerations:

- 1) safety and operational compliance
- 2) operational efficiency and feasibility assessment
- 3) environmental assessment
- 4) network assessment

One may assume that safety and operational compliance assessment would be the most significant. However, that is just an assumption as there is no indication of there being a hierarchy of importance of the various factors. There also does not appear to be any criteria listed for assessing any of the usual processes against the community suggested alternatives. Perhaps Airservices Australia might outline the process and how a comparison with the community suggested alternative is determined. Is this process done at arm’s length from aircraft/airline business interests?

Section 8.2 refers to “*operational efficiency and feasibility assessment – is the change flyable and efficient? Also does it: add significant burden to operations (the work of traffic control in managing the air space or pilot workload in flying the flight path) and does it increase track*

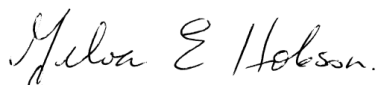
*miles for industry (creating additional emissions and operational cost)” as factors for consideration in the assessment of community suggested flight path changes. One certainly would ask the question if, given that a community suggested change meets the components of 8.3 and 8.4 (with the exception of “result in greater track miles for industry and thus greater emissions), then surely it would be considered (depending on the increased mileage if excessive and what in aviation terms is considered excessive)? Who is going to be the arbiter of such a decision? How is the community impact weighed up against the other factors? One suggestion is that a decision tree could be developed that outlines the decision making process.*

Again the independency of the decision making process is questionable and not at all transparent.

### **OSCAR recommendations**

1. That members of the PIR team and the Airservices Australia Board make declarations of any conflicts of interest they have in relation to matters under discussion with the PIR.
2. That Airservices Australia makes a clear statement about the reporting and decision-making processes associated with the PIR and the degree of independence of members of the decision-making group.
3. That Airservices Australia considers all the Core Values of the IPA2 Public Participation charter and reconsider appointing an independent chair of the decision-making process. The issues around aircraft noise and the flight paths are very complex and potentially divisive with different elements of the community with totally different ideas as to how any noise issues should be addressed. OSCAR suggests that there will be no clear resolution and only ongoing agitation unless the matters can clearly be seen to have been determined by an independent body.
4. That Airservices Australia in the first instance indicate when the Community Engagement Plan will be published and commence.
5. That Airservices Australia establish and publish the criteria and any hierarchy of criteria for assessing community suggested alternatives and the process for decision making. This would include the role of staff and industry players in in the process.
6. That Airservices Australia publish with justification: all decisions, assessments and findings; include any data used to make the determinations; and how and by whom the decisions were made of all community suggested alternatives.
7. That the final report includes a full evaluation of the PIR process as well as the individual decisions and names of decision makers.

Yours sincerely



Melva Hobson PSM  
President,

Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents (OSCAR)