



22 April 2009

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP
Chair
Industry, Science
and Innovation Committee
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Maria
Dear Ms Vamvakinou

Re: Inquiry into long-term meteorological forecasting in Australia

The Qantas Group welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the Industry, Science and Innovation Committee's inquiry into the long-term meteorological forecasting in Australia.

Weather and environment have a significant impact on flying operations and this has reinforced Qantas' close working relationship with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and similar agencies.

We would be pleased to provide any further information to the Committee if it would be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

David Epstein
Group Executive
Government and Corporate Affairs

QANTAS AIRWAYS SUBMISSION

INQUIRY INTO LONG-TERM METEOROLOGICAL FORECASTING IN AUSTRALIA

The environment, in all its forms, has a significant impact on the aviation industry and operations both in the air and on the ground. As a result, the relationship between Qantas and the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) is of vital importance.

Given the changing and increasingly difficult economic dynamics of aviation, the services provided by the BoM are fundamental for aviation to meet the increasing challenges of the future.

The BoM offers a range of aviation services and products including climate data, forecasting, warnings and observations, which are utilised by Qantas. A close and effective working relationship with the BoM is important to continually improve Qantas' operational capability.

Climate modelling methods and techniques

Climate modelling provides information to the aviation industry on the impact of future climate changes on particular markets. Qantas recognises the challenge of progressive climate change and the significant impact that this can have on costs and operations.

While the impact of climate change on airline operations is widely recognised, there is also a commercial consequence for both the aviation and tourism industries. For example, an increase in the intensity and frequency of severe weather may affect the economic viability of some routes, or rising sea levels may over time have an impact on travel to coastal areas.

The area of climate change has encouraged global collaboration and sharing of knowledge by scientists. It is important that climate change continues to be considered on a global scale, with international arrangements in place to facilitate effective information and data exchange.

Long-term meteorological prediction systems

Accurate forecasting is important from both a commercial and operational perspective. Qantas operates a number of systems and collaborates with the BoM on short to medium term forecasting necessary for operational requirements.

Qantas relies on the BoM's long-term meteorological prediction systems, which are used in the field of climate change. We support the encouragement of scientific and information technology excellence within the BoM to deliver accurate long-term meteorological forecasting products.

The scientific capability of the BoM is of a high standard. To maintain its status as a world leader in meteorology it is important that a pathway is agreed, with the aviation industry, towards continuous improvement. This pathway would involve collaboration and a renewed focus on the needs of industry.

Continuous best practice in forecasting by the BoM is crucial to maintain and preserve the safety and efficiency of aviation operations. In the case of short to medium term forecasting for example, if a terminal forecast is unduly pessimistic the

airline will carry unnecessary extra fuel at a significant financial cost. If a forecast is too optimistic, the airline may unexpectedly need to fly multiple approaches or even divert to another location.

Qantas would support the BoM being pro-active in the area of product requirements, improvements and solutions. A recent initiative by the BoM has been the introduction of consultative meetings with the aviation industry. This has resulted in effective and meaningful collaboration between the industry and the BoM, which assists in the development of future solutions and focussed research for aviation.

Potential benefits and applications for emergency response to natural disasters

The airline industry is directly affected by natural disasters and Qantas obtains a range of weather warnings reports and updates on a number of environmental events. From an operational perspective, any information is useful and assists in the management of risk.

Deterministic forecasts provide further data around the probability of an event occurring, which enables airlines to plan and take action accordingly. Qantas develops probability forecasting products to ensure that operational efficiency is maintained in a range of circumstances.

Overseas strategies, systems and research

The relationship between Qantas and the BoM has been positive and collaborative. In our experience, from an aviation perspective the partnership has been both unique and successful compared to those in most other countries.

Qantas encourages global collaboration between the BoM and counterpart agencies and service providers to ensure that the aviation industry has access to best practice environmental services.