


AUSTRALIAN AIRPORTS ASSOCIATION

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Committee Secretary**Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit****Review of Aviation Security in Australia****Parliament House****CANBERRA ACT 2600**

JOINT COMMITTEE OF

17 NOV 2003

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS & AUDIT

Dear Sir,

I am informed that as a result of the recent public hearings by the Committee in Melbourne, a number of issues emerged during the presentation of the Australian Airports Association delegation that require clarification. I have since read the Hansard Report of the exchange that took place at that time and now comment further as requested by the Committee.

The first issue to seemingly require clarification relates to questions raised by the Inquiry Chairman regarding "a co-operative relationship with DoTaRS" and "you were fairly critical in your submission of DoTaRS for not consulting". Might I respectfully suggest that it might be helpful for the Committee to re-read the comments we made on this particular matter under the heading: "a) Regulation of Aviation Security by the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services". We have not been critical of DoTaRS, their consultative approach to industry has been of a high standard, however they are not the only Government Department, based in Canberra, that has an influence and impact on security arrangements at Airports.

It would appear that Senator Watson requires an explanation on the statement in our submission "we also understand that from time to time the 'political process' as such, may impose upon the Department certain constraints that do not necessarily receive the whole-hearted approval and support of the industry."

Long before the 'September 11' incident, there has been a history of consultation with the industry on aviation security issues. On occasions general agreement/consensus is reached on matters, but due to the 'political process' (the intercession of politicians of all persuasions, trade union representations, establishment of Government Inquiries, such as this Inquiry) it becomes increasingly difficult to come to an eventual agreed position that satisfies the priorities of all those 'involved' in the process.

Over the past seven to eight years, there are many examples of industry and the various Commonwealth Government Departments with their fingers in the proverbial aviation security pie agreeing on direction and process, only to see those initiatives and proposals thwarted due to what I again refer to as the 'political process'. This is not in any way a criticism of DoTaRS, rather a recognition that perhaps they too share the frustration of the industry when it comes to resolving those many issues under review.

I trust the foregoing assists further with an understanding of some of the issues raised in our submission.

*Yours faithfully,***Ken Keech****Chief Executive**