



AIRPORT CHAOS WARNING

Sydney Airport could be hit by major delays following a decision to shut down the east-west runway for landings due to a major safety upgrade. The airport admitted to *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday that, during its \$85 million runway safety project, strong westerly crosswinds could 'disrupt' flight schedules and delay passengers. 'In the same way that fogs or electrical storms can sometimes impact on airport operations now, some flights to and from Sydney Airport may be delayed, or aircraft may need to divert to other airports,' a Sydney Airport spokesman said. Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese approved the airport's safety upgrade last week, allowing some take-offs on the east-west airstrip, but no take-offs during the works, due to start in October.

Daily Telegraph 21 August p17

LEADING MEDICAL FIGURE TO HEAD AIRCRAFT CABIN AIR STUDY

A leading Australian medical figure has been appointed to head a new group of experts to look at the issue of aircraft cabin air quality. Dr Michael Bollen will lead the Expert Panel on Aircraft Air Quality, which will review potential crew and passenger health issues related to aircraft cabin air quality.

The Panel will examine expert reports and invite submissions, ensuring all interested groups have a chance to present information. It will also critically review scientific research into cabin air quality, and produce a synopsis of current Australian and international knowledge.

Recommendations will be made on whether further research is required, or if other actions may be appropriate. These recommendations

will be presented to the existing Cabin Air Quality Reference Group, which includes representatives from airlines, unions and industry groups.

Dr Bollen has over 25 years experience as a general practitioner, along with wide-ranging experience in chairing successful committees with diverse memberships.

He has chaired Medibank Private's Health Innovations Committee, the National Health and Medical Research Council's Communications Working Group and the Australian Government's Expert Committee on Complementary Medicines in the Australian Health System.

In 2006, Dr Bollen was involved in a clinical review of multiple chemical sensitivity for the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme. This expertise in chemical sensitivity issues will assist him in exploring issues related to cabin air.

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Dr Bollen will now work with CASA to appoint members of the Expert Panel on Aircraft Air Quality. Panel members will include people with experience and qualifications in occupational and/or public health, epidemiology, immunology, toxicology, chemical risk assessment, aircraft operations and airworthiness.

The panel will meet up to eight times over the next 18 months and submit its final report by the first quarter of 2010.



INDIGENOUS CABIN CREW PROGRAM

A new program launched in August by Aviation Australia and Career Employment Australia opens up new horizons for Indigenous Australians - careers in the aviation industry.

The program, based at Aviation Australia's training centre at Brisbane Airport, provides scholarships for Indigenous Australians, and specifically those in regional areas of Queensland and the Northern Territory, helping to close the gap on key education and employment opportunities. It provides graduates with fully accredited and nationally recognised qualifications and aims to help meet the growing need for skilled workers in the industry.

'Students who successfully complete the course will attain a Certificate II in Transport and Distribution Aviation Flight Operations - Cabin Crew. The

course was developed by cabin crew experts in conjunction with Australia's major airlines to provide students with the theoretical knowledge and hands-on skills required to meet industry demands,' Aviation Australia CEO, Paul Brederbeck said.

The training team consists of current and former cabin crew from some of the world's leading airlines, including Emirates, Qantas Airways, British Airways and Virgin Blue, professionals with many years of invaluable experience.



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NORTHERN SAFETY SWEEP

Between June 30 and July 16, 2008, a team of CASA staff completed the Northern Safety Sweep in a PC-12 fixed wing aircraft. The team included flying operations inspectors, airworthiness inspectors, an investigator, an aviation safety advisor, and a number of observers. Another team of inspectors in a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter departed from and returned to Townsville.

Over the intensive 17 days, the team:

- Visited 47 aerodromes
- Covered - 6922 nautical miles
- Flew - 37 hours
- Completed ramp checks
- And the aviation safety advisor made over 30 onsite visits.

What struck the team particularly was the age of the majority of pilots working in the area. Ninety-five per cent of this observed pilot population in Northern Australia were between 21 and 30 years of age, and had between 250 hours and 1,500 hours in aircraft. This age group accounts for nearly 25 per cent of all commercial pilot licences and 56 per cent of the total number of student pilot licences.

The age and experience level of all of the pilots the team encountered during the first week of the safety sweep throughout the north-west of Western Australia was low. A generation ago, it was unheard of to have a 22-year-old pilot with only 500 hours flying a Chieftain or Cessna Caravan. Lack of supervision by older, more experienced pilots was also a concern. These younger

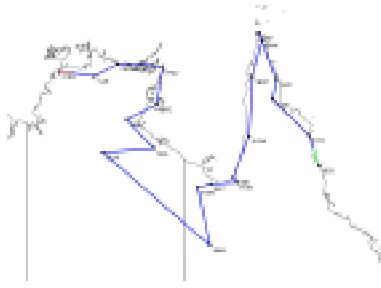
pilots are isolated geographically and therefore have limited access to information and mentoring, something CASA plans to address through its safety promotion and education areas.

A key safety issue, for example, was that of unsecured loads. One pilot, who had flown to Cooktown from Papua New Guinea, thought it was perfectly reasonable to remove the back seats and fill the space with unrestrained baggage, believing it would not move during flight. After a short discussion regarding the forces involved in even a minor accident, the pilot agreed to visit a hardware store to purchase some tie-down straps and cargo netting.

NORTHERN SAFETY SWEEP



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QANTAS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Despite a series of mechanical issues which has plagued the Qantas fleet in recent weeks, beginning with an explosion tearing a hole in the fuselage of a Qantas 747 en route from Hong Kong to Melbourne on 25 July, forcing an emergency landing at Manila, outgoing Qantas CEO, Geoff Dixon, said 'Qantas continues to have a world-class safety record'. He said he was not surprised some people would think Qantas had taken its eye off the ball after several mid-air and engineering incidents. '(But) that is not the case,' he told reporters in Sydney. 'We do not step away from the fact that the incident on QF30 in Manila was very serious,' he said. But he said a 'huge range' of engineering matters had been reported. 'We have cancelled some flights, certainly, substituted aircraft, and we have delayed some passengers, just

as every airline does.' Mr Dixon said oxygen bottles were still the most likely cause of the explosion which caused the plane's cabin to depressurise. 'The QF30 is repairable for less than \$10 million,' Mr Dixon told reporters today. 'Repairs are starting now, and it will be back in service in November'.

Australian Associated Press 21 August

CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO LEAVE CASA

Civil Aviation Safety Authority chief executive Bruce Byron has confirmed he will not renew his contract when his five-year term expires, and the search has begun for a replacement. Mr Byron told staff yesterday his contract would end in November and he believed he had done the job he was hired to do in December 2003. 'While a dynamic and mature organisation

can never sit back and say the work is complete, I am confident that reform has been achieved in the time I have been privileged to hold the position of chief executive,' he said. 'CASA now has a structure that better aligns with the aviation industry. We have introduced vastly improved processes and we are more responsive to industry, while retaining a healthy distance. Most importantly, we now do more surveillance of passenger-carrying operations, with a greater mix of skills.'

The Australian 22 August p20



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