

15 January 2013

Mr David Salisbury
Deputy General Manager
Fuel, Transport and Prices Oversight Branch
GPO Box 520
Melbourne VIC 3001



Sent via email: airport.group@acc.gov.au

Dear Mr Salisbury

Re: Discussion paper for review of airport quality of service monitoring

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the above mentioned discussion paper.

Sydney Airport is a member of the Australian Airports Association (AAA) and we have worked closely with them in preparation of a response to this discussion paper. Accordingly, Sydney Airport endorses the recommendations of the AAA paper. In particular, that:

1. The AAA should report consolidated passenger survey results to show overall industry trends
2. Airports should self-report the passenger surveys conducted by the airport for service improvement, which are more reflective of the contemporary measures of relevance
3. There should no longer be surveys of the airlines and border agencies

Sydney Airport would like to clarify and expand on the AAA paper in the following areas;

AAA reporting of consolidated industry trends

The airports would commit to agreeing a common set of questions to be asked and a common rating scale for the consolidated AAA reporting to ensure that the results are consistent and meaningful. This could be achieved through the use of the ACI ASQ survey, which a number of airports already subscribe to.

Airport self-reporting

Whilst airport self-reporting would use the surveys relied upon for business improvement, they should also include:

- Confirmation of the sample size (to ensure it is sufficiently large and representative to give meaningful results)
- Transparency of the rating scale used
- Transparency of the relevant passenger groups surveyed and the facilities to which the surveys relate e.g. demographic, gender and terminal

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Airline and border agency surveys

Sydney Airport is particularly concerned that the airline and border agency surveys are routinely unreliable and misleading. As Sydney Airport has previously noted, they comprise of very small sample sizes, self-selection bias and conflict of interest.

The outcome of this is that the results are frequently contradictory to objective data and airline comments. For example, there is no observed relationship between the objective percentage of passengers using aerobridges and the airlines satisfaction with aerobridge availability. Likewise, there are substantial year-to-year changes in the rating of the quality (not availability) of infrastructure such as runways and taxiways despite periodic improvements in the quality through investments (such as enhanced lighting and additional taxiways).

Sydney Airport has extensive ongoing dialogue with its airline partners and the border agencies, including the conduct of its own surveys to receive timely feedback on its performance. This feedback and dialogue, in conjunction with the passenger survey results, is used to enhance the performance of the airport – which, judging by the passenger survey results, has been steadily increasing for several years. The ACCC airline surveys bear little relationship to any discussions that the airport has had with the airlines.

Objective measures

Sydney Airport is concerned that many of the ‘objective’ quality of service criteria are of minimal relevance and can give results counter to the underlying experience that a passenger or airline demands. For example, being measured on aerobridges and check in counters is erroneous when some airlines are demanding the removal of aerobridges and the installation of self-service technology to replace check in counters.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion paper. We look forward to the ACCC’s considered review of the current airport quality of service monitoring. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Claire Donnellan, Manager Customer Experience at Claire.donnellan@syd.com.au or on 02 9667 6473.

Yours sincerely



Sally Fielke
General Manager, Corporate Affairs