



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

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**JCPAA RECOMMENDS ACTION ON AVIATION SECURITY**

As Deputy Chair of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts & Audit, I welcome the committee's report No. 409: *Developments in aviation security since the committee's June 2004 report 400: review of aviation security in Australia.*

This report gets the balance right between public safety and affordable and convenient air travel.

There have been more than 80 publicly reported airport security incidents since 2004, some of which are extremely alarming. The committee has responded strongly to these community concerns, and recommended long-overdue actions that I urge the Government to take up.

Supporting Sir John Wheeler's view that where crime is possible security can be at risk, we recommended random audits, particularly at Sydney airport as an essential measure to assuring that the public, airport owners, airlines and government have confidence in the security regime.

Tighter control of the issuing and checking of Aviation Security ID Cards, improved consultation between DOTARS and the industry, and a specific reporting regime were all strong recommendations. Taking on board the evidence of the Transport Workers' Union we have recommended specific and uniform training standards to give more confidence and certainty to the careers of people working in the field as well as a uniform code for the operators of CCTV.

As the Member for Newcastle, where the airport has seen almost 400% growth in passengers in the last two years, I am also pleased with the recommendations on regional airports.

The committee has, among other recommendations, asked the Department to investigate the feasibility of checked bag screening at booming regional airports like Newcastle. It also recognised the need to assist fast growing transitioning regional airports with the costs of upgrades.

In all, the committee's recommendations will ensure a more accountable, efficient and effective aviation security regime. I urge the Government to respond swiftly and positively to them.

The complexity of this issue - when combined with the other national security issues faced by our nation - shows that the Government should also take up Labor's policy of establishing a single Department of Homeland Security.

**Canberra**  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
Ph: 02 6277 4221  
Fax: 02 6277 8461



**Newcastle**  
427 Hunter Street  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300  
Ph: 02 4926 1555  
Fax: 02 4926 1895  
[www.sharongrierson.com](http://www.sharongrierson.com)