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PARLIAMENTARY WATCHDOG URGED TO CONSIDER
AIRPORT SECURITY

Sharon Grierson, Deputy Chair of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA) and Federal Member for Newcastle, today urged the Committee to investigate continuing revelations of breaches in airport security.

Recent reports of aviation security breaches and baggage mishandling have ranged from pranks to serious allegations by the whistleblower in the Corby case of organised luggage tampering for illegal drug movements. What is alarming is that the possible consequences to the travelling public range from inconvenience to loss of freedom and life.

In 2004, over 38.7 million passengers were carried on domestic airlines, and international passenger traffic was over 19.3 million.

It is vital that people can move through our airports confident that their personal safety and security will not be at risk.

As "the Parliament's watchdog", JCPAA can help the Australian public gain those assurances.

JCPAA tabled a report ten months ago - *Review of Aviation Security in Australia* - which made a number of important recommendations on improving airport security in this country.

It is time for the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) to give an account to the Committee of its progress in implementing these recommendations, including:

- incidents that have occurred since the report's release,
- actions taken as a result of these incidents,
- progress to date of the working party reviewing the adequacy of current qualification and training of staff in the aviation industry,
- the role of the new Inspector of Transport Security in investigating security incidents,
- how the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005, which came into force in March 2005, have incorporated the inquiry recommendations, and
- the current status of the implementation of the Regulations.

Labor Committee members will formally move that DOTARS give a full account of the development of a comprehensive aviation security policy to protect travelling Australians from harm.

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