



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle



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AVIATION SECURITY

Federal Member for Newcastle, Sharon Grierson, today expressed alarm at the revelation in Parliament that the Inspector of Transport Security, Mick Palmer, has not been acting in this position for the past four months.

As Deputy Chair of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, Ms Grierson has acted on ongoing breaches of aviation security since the Committee's inquiry into the issue last year. As a result, the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) has been instructed to brief the Committee on its activities on June 15.

"The revelations today that we haven't had an Inspector of Transport Security since February makes it all the more important that DOTARS gives a full account to the Committee," Ms Grierson said.

"The Australian travelling public has a right to know who is looking after its safety at airports. If it's not Mr Palmer, then who is it?"

"While the position has been vacant security incidents have continued to occur in our airports, including inebriated men scaling the perimeter fence to board a plane at Perth Airport, allegations in the Corby case of organised drug smuggling by baggage handlers, costumes taken from luggage being worn by baggage handlers, and Federal Police investigations into elaborate cocaine smuggling operations in our airports."

"The report of the Committee's initial inquiry into aviation security was generally favourable, with several recommendations that DOTARS act on specific concerns. However, in light of continuing security problems, there are serious reservations about the adequacy of DOTARS' response."

For more information contact Sharon Grierson on 4926 1555

Newcastle
427 Hunter Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
Ph: 02-4926 1555 Fax: 02-4926 1895
e-mail: Sharon.Grierson.MP@aph.gov.au



Canberra
Suite R2 88
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
Ph: 02-6277 4221 Fax: 02-6277 8461
Web Page: www.newcastle-alp.com