Safety & Technical Update

By the Safety & Technical Team

The Safety and Technical (S&T) Team participate in many forums and undertake activities to ensure that high safety standards are maintained in Australia and, through IFALPA, globally. The following is a brief outline of some of the current issues with which your Safety and Technical Committee has been engaged.

ACCIDENT ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION (AAP)

AIPA Representation

Since the last issue of Altitude, AIPA has assisted members involved in 22 safety incidents.

> Remember if you are involved in an incident or accident, call the AIPA 24-hour Accident/Incident Hotline on +61 (0)2 8307 7788 (including weekends and public holidays) for advice. We have experienced volunteers available from across the Qantas Group to assist you.

Safety Interview Training

We will also be running a Safety Interview Training Course on 30 June at the AIPA Office to provide volunteers with the necessary skills to effectively assist members in Company safety and ATSB interviews. If you are interested or would like more information on this course, please contact us at safety.technical@aipa.org.au.

AIRCRAFT DESIGN AND OPERATIONS (ADO)

Communication Interference by Military Warships in the Pacific Region

IFALPA reached out to AusALPA regarding reports that Chinese ships may have been interfering with commercial airliners in the Pacific and requested confirmation of a rumour that some Australian aircraft were affected. AIPA confirmed these occurrences and noted that these have been reported to IATA.

AERODROME AND GROUND ENVIRONMENT (AGE)

Local Runway Safety Teams (LRSTs)

AusALPA continues its participation in LRSTs at most major Australian airports and provides input into their projects, including the installation and operation of stopbars, low visibility operations, wildlife and major works projects. These include the implementation of a Low-Level Windshear and Turbulence Alerting System (LLWAS), using LIDARs to provide real-time alerts to pilots, at Sydney Airport, the overlay of RWY 16/34 and the construction of Melbourne Airport's third runway, and the development of Western Sydney Airport, as well as the overall impact of COVID on airports.

Stopbars

It was identified at the last National Runway Safety Group meeting that the number of illuminated stopbars being crossed had increased dramatically and now represents the main cause of the 29 Runway Incursions for the reported period. As a result, the Stopbar Working Group, in which AusALPA is actively engaged, has been reinstated with the aim of trying to establish the root cause/s and make recommendations.

Wildlife

AusALPA made a submission on the National Airports Safeguarding Framework Guideline C (Managing the Risk of Wildlife Strikes in the Vicinity of Airports. AusALPA believe that the NASF is the best current vehicle to eventually achieve our goal of a standardised national approach to airport safeguarding that applies to all airports in all jurisdictions. The primary issue, however, remains the enactment of these guidelines into legislation, and we maintain the belief that to achieve our goal there needs to be a single authority that is ceded all necessary powers by each of the jurisdictions to enforce the intended safety outcomes. Until these guidelines are enacted, the responses from this Review may improve the document but not the outcome. The NASF Guideline C is a good document, but without "teeth", its practical function is limited.

National Runway Safety Group (NRSG)

AusALPA remains a key member of the NRSG, the peak body for runway safety and part of the State Safety Programme. Significant items of focus include the Global Reporting Format (GRF), runway safety data, use of stopbars and NOTAMs.

Global Reporting Format (GRF)

AusALPA representatives attended the NRSG GRF Working Group meeting which was called to review the feedback received following the publication of the Proposed Policy document. There was a sizeable number that supported a close alignment with ICAO rather than an Australian variant. Airservices has agreed to provide Runway Condition Codes of 5 (Wet) and 6 (Dry) if the airport includes this provision in the Letter of Agreement (LoA). The indication, however, is that airports' legal departments will not be happy with the LoA for this and other areas.

AusALPA's submission on the draft policy proposals highlighted the long transitional periods and that Australia's aim was not to be more ICAO compliant.

Vertiports

AusALPA responded to the draft Advisory Circular (AC) released by CASA which details the design specification for vertiports supporting next generation Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) capable aircraft with a pilot on board. The Association noted that it was essential that these operations do not interfere or endanger aerodrome operations and particular attention should be paid to the vertiport's proximity to other aerodromes. Site selection criteria, including airport proximity limitations, should be measured against risk and complexity of proposed operations.

It was also stressed that wind direction indicators are extremely important and must be mandated. Whilst the AC cannot do this, the overlying regulation and/or standard must do so. AusALPA also recommended CASA aligning more closely with EASA and/or the FAA guidelines.

Reducing Safety for Noise Abatement and Capacity

AusALPA wrote to Pip Spence (CASA CEO) regarding the reduction of safety for noise abatement, specifically with reference to Brisbane (increasing the tailwind to 7knots) to facilitate more "over-the bay" operations and Sydney airport for capacity (increasing the crosswind limitation on the parallel runways to 25 knots, including gusts, before switching to the single into wind runway). AusALPA stressed that CASA must defer any decisions until proper and transparent consultation, including justifiable safety cases, have been completed.

Ship Sizes at Hayes Dock

AIPA wrote to Sydney Airport (SACL) regarding airspace protection and the operational consequences in relation to the revised vessel dimensions for the swing basin and Hayes Dock at Port Botany. It was noted that the implementation of a LIDAR LLWAS system would assist in mitigating the impacts of turbulence caused by existing and future ships moored at these docks by providing safety advice to pilots in a timely manner.

Previously, the Port worked collaboratively with SACL on a LIDAR study of turbulence which demonstrated turbulence exceeding the NASF guidelines. AIPA's view is that the provision of a real-time windshear and turbulence warning system is essential to the safe and efficient operation of both facilities. Considering the potential for strong easterly winds across Port Botany to result in the closure of the eastern runway, AIPA strongly recommended that SACL approach both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments for funding for a LIDAR LLWAS to provide operational protection on RWY16L/34R, with the additional benefit of validating the various wind studies.

Interestingly, the ICAO Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) calls on Contracting States (including Australia) to "Make use of any available technologies, such as wind shear warning system, where appropriate; and to "Implement an enhanced global reporting format for assessing and reporting runway surface conditions…".

AIR TRAFFIC SERIVICES (ATS)

Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)

The Association attended the BoM Aerodrome Weather Services (AWS) Workshop where discussion revolved around the future vision of AWS; issues associated with the TAF3, including an overview of feedback; "Back-houring" and amendment to 30-hour TAF3, following issuance but prior to commencement of validity. The BoM wants to move, in the future, to a system where data is available to the users, and they decide what to use, rather than a one product fits all approach.

HUMAN PERFORMANCE (HUPER)

FRMS Consultation Mechanism

AusALPA is still trying to establish tripartite consultation for FRMS. AIPA has written to the CASA CEO regarding FRMS implementation policy and its relegation by CASA to the status of an interested, rather than an involved, party.

SECURITY AND DANGEROUS GOODS (SEC/DG)

Implementing A Single Issuing Body Reform for ASICs and MSICs

AusALPA provided a submission to the AusCheck Discussion Paper (DP) regarding the implementation of a single issuing body reform for aviation and maritime. AusALPA completely supports the vision outlined in the DP and strengthening the integrity of ASICs/MSICs and believes that access to security-controlled areas should only be permitted by using a suitably encoded ASIC/MSIC. The card ideally should incorporate biometric data.

Following this, an AusCheck Advisory Group (AAG) has been set up to provide advice to the Department on implementation, transition progress and service levels, also acting as a communications channel between the aviation and maritime industry sector and the Department. AusALPA has nominated Second Officer Rob Herweynen and Captain David Mogford as its representatives on the AAG.

Meeting with Home Affairs

AusALPA met with representatives from Home Affairs to discuss our position on security screening at airports, the differing processes at airports around the country and some of the issues members faced. A system similar to the 'known crew member' program for Australia was advocated.

ICAO Working Group on Innovation in Aviation Security (WGIAS)

SEC/DG Chair, Rob Herweynen, represented IFALPA at the last ICAO WGIAS meeting in Melbourne. This working group advises the AVSECP Aviation Security Panel (AVSECP) for appropriate security screening equipment (to screen passenger baggage and air cargo for prohibited security items).

Our industry continues to operate in a challenging environment influenced by many factors which can alter the balance between profitability and safety standards. Nonetheless, as this year progresses, AusALPA will remain dedicated to preserving and advancing standards of safety domestically and internationally. If you have any concerns or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office via office@ausalpa.org.au.■