

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon John Anderson MP

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services
Leader of The Nationals



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NATIONAL AIRSPACE SYSTEM: COMMENTS BY DICK SMITH

Australia's skies are safe and will continue to be safe after 25 November, despite the comments today by Dick Smith.

On 25 November, Airservices Australia will carry out enhancements to the National Airspace System. They are the product of a lengthy period of analysis and consultation.

Mr Smith's claims are not supported by anyone with any credibility in the aviation sector. The major airlines, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Airservices Australia all disagree with his views.

On 2 November, I released a report from CASA about the enhancements. Its Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Byron, concluded that:

Based on the material presented to CASA, including the risk mitigation strategies proposed, I have no safety-related basis to object to the planned changes being implemented on 25 November 2004.

(...) any attempt to halt the planned changes would result in widespread confusion that would present unacceptable risks to the travelling public.

The process of airspace reform will continue in line with the Government's election commitments. The next stage of the NAS reforms will take effect next year, and I will shortly be introducing legislation to establish a separate airspace directorate.

I invited Dick Smith to join the airspace reform process to offer conceptual advice on a model for airspace reform. I thank him for his contribution. The reforms are now progressing well, and I have advised him that his role is at an end.

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URL: http://www.ministers.dotars.gov.au/ja/releases/2004/November/a166_2004.htm