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CHECK-IN: *Photo ID may be needed to board domestic flights*

Push for ID to board domestic flights

Security boost proposed for air and sea ports.

Passengers flying domestic Australian routes will need photo identification to board aircraft if recommendations to boost security at air and sea ports are adopted by the federal government.

Federal parliament's Law Enforcement Committee found that current security arrangements are not adequate to meet the challenge posed by criminal networks involved in the drug trade, money laundering, tobacco smuggling, counterfeiting and the illegal trade of plants and animals.

"The committee is deeply concerned by the level of organised criminal activity occurring in the aviation and maritime sectors," committee chair Senator Steve Hutchins (NSW) said.

"The prevailing security regime in the aviation and maritime sectors was introduced in the post-September 11 climate and focuses narrowly on the threat of terrorist attack.

"[The committee] makes recommendations in this report that would see the security regime extended to defend against the threat of organised crime."

The committee is seeking to reduce the vulnerability of the aviation sector by requiring photo identification to be shown before boarding an aircraft and creating a new criminal offence of travelling under a false identity.

"Organised crime figures are currently able to travel under false identities with impunity, facilitating criminal activity," Senator Hutchins said.

Former head of security at the Federal Airports Corporation Michael Carmody told the inquiry passenger identity was a weakness in aviation security.

"You can put yourself on an aircraft this afternoon, a 767, capable of flying anywhere, and no-one verifies either your identification or verifies you to the ticket to the bag," he said. "And when you enter the sterile area, because there are non-flying persons in that sterile area, you can swap your ticket with anyone and that person could then board the aircraft. This is just crazy stuff."

The Australian Services Union indicated that the increasing use of electronic check-in processes has reduced the ability of airline staff to assess the behaviour of passengers or check their identity.

Qantas was wary of increased security measures due to the lack of standard identity documentation and the cost of introducing the system.

Recommendations in relation to seaports include the creation of joint maritime taskforces in each state and the Northern Territory, a Commonwealth maritime crime taskforce, and increased port security including ID checks and CCTV cameras. ●

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www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/le_ctte
le.committee@aph.gov.au
(02) 6277 3419