

**Twenty Eighth Meeting of the
Informal South Pacific ATS Co-ordinating Group
(ISPACG/28)**

**Papeete, Tahiti
5-7 March 2014**

Agenda Item 3: Review Relevant Work Conducted Since ISPACG/27

HF Working Group Update

Presented by Airways NZ

SUMMARY

Update on the work of the ISPACG High Frequency working group activities for 2013.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The South Pacific HF working group was formed in 2006 after an ISPACG recommendation that representatives from HF ground stations address a number of issues affecting flight operations in the south pacific.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1 The last meeting of the SP6 meeting, chaired by Tim Halpin – Team Leader Air-ground, Airways NZ, was held in Brisbane in November 2013 and attended by all representatives of the SP6 network.
- 2.2 Part of the group’s responsibility is to undertake surveys to ascertain firstly the level of service provided from the HF network and to act upon any issues airline customers report on. The most recent survey of the High frequency network was completed in December 2013 with 204 responses being received from around the pacific.
- 2.3 Overall results indicate that there is little change to the average score for the network over the last 3 surveys with “Interference from other ground stations – same frequency”, the “quality of HF” and “the response time to clearance requests” receiving the lowest scores.

2.4 Responses to the question “*How can the SP6 HF network be improved*” resulted in a number of similar replies indicating that there were too many ground stations using the same frequencies at the same time, that replacing HF with datalink, FMC or Satvoice being required and that one ground station needs to improve their overall performance.

2.5 SP6 networks response to issues raised in the survey;

- **Too many facilities using same frequency** – There is a notification process in place so each air ground station notifies its adjacent provider of its primary and secondary frequency to avoid using the same HF frequency wherever possible. An example of this is that Brisbane often operates one frequency above Auckland. There is an issue with Auckland and Nadi being on the same time zone and often using the same frequency due propagation characteristics however in recent weeks Nadi has found an 8Mhz frequency that the group is seeking clarification from ICAO if it could be utilized.
- **Quality of HF** - The act of communicating over long distances with the propagation characteristics of HF often results in skip distances areas where little or no HF communication is possible. Solar activity often creates “fadeouts” in large geographic areas. ANSP’s should ensure that they operate the most efficient aerial array and align HF coverage to capture their entire FIR.
- **Response times to clearance requests** – each HF facility in the SP6 network is required to monitor and report on the delivery time of HF clearances. This includes the time from receipt of said request to receipt of such. Current figures for the **average** network delivery time are just under 2 minutes. Other factors that do increase the delay of issuing weather related clearances are
 - Traffic.
 - Application of the separations standard being applied by ATC.
 - Position of the aircraft relative to the FIR boundary both ahead and behind the aircraft.
 - If coordination with the next facility has been completed (LOA’s between facilities now expedite weather deviation requests).
- **Replacing HF with datalink / FMC WPR / SATCOM voice** – HF will be around for some time yet and ICAO has mandated Oceanic service providers to continue to provide HF until at least 2025.
- **Operator performance** – offer of assistance made to address comments in survey relating to one ground facility with respect to operator response times, phraseology used and professionalism.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) Note the results of the recent survey and the SP6 networks response to such.
- b) Discuss any issues arising from this update.