CRIMES (AIRCRAFT) AMENDMENT BILL 1979

Date Introduced: 23 May 1979
House: Senate
Presented by: Senator Hon. P.D. Durack, Attorney-General

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To prohibit acts endangering the safety of aerodromes and air navigation facilities and the making of threats and false statements about such places.

Background

The commission of acts likely to endanger the safety of aircraft and the making of threats about aircraft are offences covered by sections 17 and 19 of the Crimes (Aircraft) Act 1963. Similar actions relating to aerodromes and air navigation facilities are not presently covered by the Act; although making hoax telephone calls is an offence under the Telecommunications (General) By-Laws other similar actions are covered by State law or not at all.

In his Second Reading Speech the Attorney-General commented that bomb hoax telephone calls involving airports are on the increase and are causing delays and inconvenience.

This Bill inserts provisions to cover such offences where aerodromes or air navigation facilities are under Commonwealth control. It is intended to discuss with State Attorneys-General the possibility of complementary laws to cover airports and facilities which are under the control of State governments.

Main Provisions

Clause 4 inserts a new Part IIIA covering the new offences. New section 20A defines "Commonwealth aerodrome" and "Commonwealth air navigation" facilities. New section 20B makes it an offence, with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for seven years, to do acts likely to endanger the safety of Commonwealth aerodromes or air navigation facilities. Clause 20C makes it an offence, with a maximum penalty of imprisonment for two years, to make threats or false statements from which it can be inferred that the
safety of aerodromes and facilities is endangered. These penalties are equivalent to those for the similar offences relating to aircraft.

Clause 5 amends section 26 of the Act dealing with powers of search to cover the searching of persons, luggage etc. within aerodromes and facilities if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an offence has been or will be committed.