

STATION	ABC
PROGRAM	PNN Rolling News
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SUMMARY	<p>The federal Minister for Transport John Anderson has warned that airfares are likely to rise to pay for what he says will be a significant capital investment in airport security in Australia.</p> <p>Interview with Sir John Wheeler, security consultant; Norman Shanks, formerly Heathrow Airport security;</p>
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NEWSREADER:

The Transport Minister, John Anderson, has warned that airfares are likely to rise to pay for what he says will be a significant capital investment in airport security in Australia.

Seventy thousand airport workers and a hundred and thirty thousand seaport workers are to be checked for past criminal records, and a review of security is to be conducted by a former British cabinet minister, in Sir John Wheeler.

Sir John reviewed airport security in the UK after the September eleventh attacks, and since then he's headed the body overseeing Britain's National Crime Intelligence Service.

REPORTER:

As a former member of a Conservative government, appointed by Tony Blair's Labour government after the September eleven



attacks, Sir John Wheeler's review of airport security was well received.

So according to the man himself, how much changed at British airports after his review?

SIR JOHN WHEELER – SECURITY CONSULTANT:

A great deal. A great deal of money, too, is being spent by Heathrow airport to improve its security. But among the things that were achieved was the setting up of robust airport security committees, headed by the management, in which all the key players contribute and are accountable to each other for what they do, and improved arrangements for the use of CCTV product.

REPORTER:

Norman Shanks is a former head of security at Heathrow and at British Airways. Does he think the review prompted a great deal of change?

NORMAN SHANKS – FORMERLY HEATHROW AIRPORT SECURITY:

In terms of aviation security, and ... probably very little. What really changed was we started to get the various government forces talking to each other and sharing information.

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REPORTER:

Even before Sir John's review has started, Canberra's decided the Australian Federal Police will be the ultimate authority, with a security controller at every airport.

Norman Shanks says that's a mistake, that police are good with crime, but bad at overseeing security, particularly private companies such as those that check passengers and baggage.

On the role of the AFP, Sir John is noncommittal on how central they should be.

WHEELER:

Well, of course, they've got to play their part. But the question you pose to me is one which I will be able to better answer at the end of the inquiry rather than at the beginning of it.

REPORTER:

One effect of Sir John Wheeler's British review was that, for the first time, all airport staff endured security checks on their way to and from work, the same at those currently endured by passengers. And that's something he says Australia may well consider.

WHEELER:

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Not only the passengers using the airports, but staff of all backgrounds, must be subject to proper searching procedures, particularly when they go to airside and from airside. And I shall particularly want to listen to what the trade unions and the staff associations have to say about these things, because it's the protection of their members that matters just as much as the protection of the public interest.

REPORTER:

The British review also found very little evidence of criminal activity at airports. Sir John Wheeler wouldn't say if he expected the same in Australia.

NAPIER:

Rafael Epstein in London.

END OF SEGMENT

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