Breakdown of separation

Australia

On 24th November the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) reported that on 3rd September last year (2009) at about 1859 Eastern Standard Time, a Boeing 737-838 aircraft was en route from Sydney, New South Wales to Adelaide, South Australia and a Boeing 777-31H aircraft was en route from Melbourne, Victoria to Singapore.

ATSB’s investigation found that the aircraft were on crossing tracks and both were cruising at flight level 300. Air traffic control separation standard was infringed and there was a breakdown of separation.

According to a synopsis of the report the air traffic controller responsible for separation of the aircraft had recently completed the air navigation service provider’s approved training, but had not recognised the potential conflict between the two aircraft.

As a result of this incident, Airservices Australia has amended the compromised separation recovery component of an air traffic controller’s training, and introduced a compromised separation recovery element into its final controller field training.