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Dear Nick Dowie,

Noise is an ambiguous thing, do you not agree?

When, once or twice a year, a town is alive with fanfare or the night air crackles with fireworks, we can be fairly sure that noise, in these infrequent instances, is an expression of community pleasure-making and solidarity.

And when noise consists of the back-blast of jet engines arriving or taking off every two minutes in air traffic operations that are convenient to the few passengers and the fewer business folk making profits from freight and passenger handling while inconvenient to all those who must listen to this uproar for 24 hours in each day, then noise is a tyranny.

The proposal to upgrade Canberra Airport to a 24 hour freight hub and auxiliary airport to Sydney's International Airport is, put baldly, a move by democratically elected government to impose tyranny on a sizeable part of their constituency.

How wonderful that, in a country, conspicuous in its opposition to various kinds of tyranny, internal and external, we may now observe those in power seeking to impose on us a tyranny that is particularly relentless, arbitrary and irreversible.

Why is the imposition of unregulated aircraft noise and its attendant increase in road-traffic howl a tyranny? It is because these things subject ordinary lives to pernicious uproar, destroy the rhythms of sleep and wakeful repose required for bonny health, and disturb those conditions needed by all whose work requires serenity for its effectiveness.

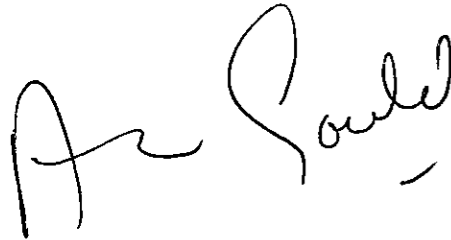
When opportunities for personal wealth are in prospect, will the entrepreneurs and their planners associated with the Canberra Airport proposals divert their formidable energies to quieter projects? I don't trust to it. But politicians who trumpet the virtues of a free society might be brought to see how the bringing of hellish continuous uproar to a portion of the population upon whom their fortunes rely at ballot time, may find it wise to legislate against these proposals where their essentially totalitarian quality is made vivid.

Of course I agree with those who link high-blood pressure to relentless industrial noise, and other such specific considerations. But my overriding concerns are twofold.

Firstly, the present plans to expand Canberra Airport in order to make it a 'freight hub' will degrade the vital qualities of life that have led people to choose this town and countryside in which to live.

And secondly, they will degrade the very fabric of those freedoms that have been hard-won in what we like to call our free society. A community of people who cannot hear themselves speak above the uproar of aircraft and road traffic are not free; they are no longer even a community.

Yours sincerely,
Alan Gould.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alan Gould". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a distinct "G".