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ACT Chief Minister stanhope@act.gov.au

Dear Mr Dowie and Stanhope,

I wish to provide comment on the discussion paper 'Safeguards for airports and the communities around them', as it relates to aircraft noise.

As a member of the community, my 'community expectation' is to enjoy a good night's sleep, undisturbed by aircraft noise. This is a matter of public health, with clear evidence now showing a link between night-time exposure to aircraft noise and high blood pressure. This happens even if you don't wake up (see the European Commission's HYENA study at www.hyena.eu.com, which was published in the European Heart Journal, 2008).

I consider that the discussion paper is grossly inadequate in its omission of safeguards to sleep. I live in an existing residential area of Canberra, adjacent to the flight path where I can hear aircraft. Background noise is very low, particularly at night, and I place enormous value on this peaceful and quiet amenity. It is currently threatened by a proposal by Canberra Airport for a massive expansion to a 24-hour freight and passenger hub. Local ACT laws protect my sleep from being disturbed by noise, but there are no equivalent measures to protect my sleep from aircraft noise.

My recommendation is that the safeguards should recognise the following:

- The community has an expectation that sleeping hours will not be disturbed by aircraft noise
- Night-time exposure to aircraft noise is detrimental to public health
- A night-time noise standard should be established, respecting evidence of the noise level at which sleep disturbance occurs (for example the World Health Organisation)
- Peaceful and quiet residential amenity at night-time should be safeguarded from major expansions by airports.

In addition to the above, attached below is our original 9 May 2009 submission to the Canberra Airport 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan, and some references.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff and Susan Davidson

Attachment – 9 May 2009 submission to the Canberra Airport 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan

I am a Canberra resident and I do not support the Canberra Airport's 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan.

I do not support a 24 hour airport for Canberra:

- The noise generated by the aircraft will disturb the sleep of many Canberra residents, particularly those of the Inner North who will be most affected by the noise of aircraft taking off and landing. Noise at night is more troublesome for sleep, as the relative quiet at night (versus the day) contrasts more with any noise generated by aircraft. Additionally, studies have shown that aircraft noise has biological effects on people even when they are sleeping (e.g. increased blood pressure)
- In addition to the aircraft noise, there will be noise generated by the freight trucks that deliver freight to the airport
- Shift workers and those who work night-time shifts are known to have a number of health issues related to their shift work – who will pay for these health costs? Not the airport! It will be Canberrans who foot the bill.

I do not support the increase in airport use proposed in the Canberra Airport 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan:

- Increased airport use will mean increased noise pollution for Canberra residents, particularly those in the north
- Increased airport use will mean increased air pollution for Canberra residents, particularly those in the north. The negative health effects of living close to busy airports has been well documented. Again, who will foot the increased health bill? Not the airport, but Canberrans

I do not support the concept of Canberra airport as a freight depot for Sydney-bound and -outbound freight:

- Sydney airport has a curfew that Sydney does not wish to lift, so as to minimise disturbance to Sydney residents – it's their freight, so let them be disturbed!
- The environmental impact of trucking freight between Sydney and Canberra has not been factored into this Master Plan. Instead of air freighting directly to and from Sydney, the plan is to now truck the freight between Sydney and Canberra as well. This would have to be the most environmentally unsound proposal possible!
- The wear and tear on our roads of all those extra trucks travelling between Canberra and Sydney has also not been factored into this Master Plan. Again, will the Canberra Airport be footing this bill? No, the people of New South Wales and Canberra will!

In summary, this is a short-sighted plan to make additional revenue for the owners of Canberra airport, with a promise of a few extra long-term jobs for Canberra. The trade-off for Canberrans is extra noise, disturbed sleep for many in the north of Canberra, extra pollution, exceeding our greenhouse gas targets by a huge margin, and additional health and road infrastructure costs for which Canberrans will have to pay. It's not worth it!

Yours sincerely,
[signed and dated]

References

<http://www.inmycommunity.com.au/news-and-views/local-news/Flight-paths-destroy-tranquillity/7530142/>

inmycommunity.com.au article 13 July 2009

Australian newspaper 13 July 2009 – Airlines do not want to be out of Sydney airport.