



Jerrabomberra Residents Association Inc.

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Dear Sir

Safeguards for airports and the communities Discussion Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission Safeguards for airports and the communities around them discussion paper.

Please find a submission from the Jerrabomberra Residents' Association (JRA) attached.

Yours faithfully

Margot Sachse
JRA President

29 July 2009

WHO IS THE JRA?

The Jerrabomberra Residents Association (JRA) is one of the most active community organisations in the Queanbeyan City – Canberra region.

We were formed by volunteers from the newly-established Jerrabomberra community in the early 1990s, to help foster community spirit and develop caring relationships between local families. Over time, the JRA became increasingly involved with advocacy and lobbying for the particular needs of our community, at a Local, State and Federal level.

While we maintain our 'community' focus and desire to make Jerrabomberra a special place to live, we also draw on the collective experience, and skills of our JRA members to ensure infrastructure and resourcing concerns are addressed by all levels of governments.

Jerrabomberra residents are all too familiar with the impact aircraft noise has on their daily lives. This has become a major problem since December 1995 when, at the request of the ACT Government, the flight path was changed and all planes were funnelled down the western side of Jerrabomberra. The Instrument Landing System (ILS), or the flight path centre line, goes from Church Creek along the western part of Jerrabomberra to the end of the runway. With 489 residences currently falling outside the current noise abatement area, aircraft noise is a regular concern to all Jerrabomberra residents as aircraft noise does not stay outside the noise abatement area and Canberra Airport currently does not have a night time curfew.

Part B: Issues and Options for Safeguards – Planning for compatible development

In general terms, JRA supports the existing national ANEF standard to determine the suitability of land use adjacent to or near airports. As a residents association the JRA believes a national ANEF standard provides commercial confidence for businesses and a suitable comfort zone for residents.

However, the JRA believes that additional work is required within the ANEF development framework or that a State Planning Minister can override the ANEF may be worthy of consideration. As it stands an airport owner currently has the capacity to effectively sterilise land they do not own, simply by manipulating a future use forecast and creating a bogus ANEF.

Jerrabomberra was approved for development by Council in 1987 with the first houses being constructed in 1988. The major developer of Jerrabomberra was Jerrabomberra Estates Limited.

At the time of development residents were made many promises of community infrastructure, like the indoor sports complex that would include a 4 court indoor basketball stadium, indoor pool, restaurant site, a much larger shopping centre than we have and a business precinct. There were also promises of a non-government primary school in the Heights. Unfortunately, as development progressed these promises were not honoured and houses were built on all these sites. To add to infrastructure woes of Jerrabomberra, the Jerrabomberra Public School had its first intake of students in 2002. The school took ten years to be established, mainly due to Department of Education forecasts that it would not be viable for twenty years and was therefore not required. The school has well and truly surpassed its infrastructure capacity, as it was originally designed as a '14 core' school, and is now a '33 core' school with over 820 students in 2009.

The JRA supports development in the Jerrabomberra Valley that is compatible with surrounding development (not industrial). We see this as an opportunity for our community to get the community facilities it was initially promised, but never got. Facilities include an Anglican High School, Aquatic Centre and other sports facilities. The JRA has been working on this matter for many years, as development in the Jerrabomberra Valley has been continuously stalled as a result of the fierce opposition to the development by Canberra Airport and the seemingly endless litigation between the airport and the developer and government reviews. The Canberra Airport supports industrial development in the Valley.

With the amended Queanbeyan Residential and Economic strategy approved, the Council and the NSW Planning Department can proceed with getting the land rezoned during 2009. The JRA hopes that the Anglican High School will open for 2011 school year.

School location

In 7 February 2007, the JRA attended a meeting with the then NSW Planning Minister Hon Frank Sartor. We were joined by the Jerrabomberra Secondary Schools Committee, the Canberra International Airport and Queanbeyan City Council at the Ministers request. The aim of this meeting was to find a resolution to the opposition by Canberra Airport to the development in the Jerrabomberra Valley.

At this meeting the JRA presented an alternative responsible compromise position. It provided Jerrabomberra with community facilities including the Anglican High School, Aquatic Centre and other sporting amenities; provided for sensible residential development of some areas in the Jerrabomberra Valley; and also accommodated the needs of the Canberra Airport. These facilities were located in the Poplars area with the 16ha school site located outside the ANEF20 providing excellent access to existing major roads. The JRA position was a win-win for all parties, and the Minister listened intently to the detail of our plan. He then asked the Canberra Airport owners if they had any issues with the high school being located on the Western side of the Poplars. The Airport owners studied our plan and said that they did not have any issues with the school being located at this site.

Within three months of this meeting, the Canberra Airport released their Practical Ultimate Capacity (PUC) ANEF where they predict that by 2050 Canberra will have 282,120 flights every year - up from just 71,850 flights per year today. This would make it as busy as the UK's Gatwick Airport. Sydney Airport (Australia's busiest; with a population of 4 million and parallel runways) currently has 285,000 movements/year. The Airport also proposes to have a 15 degrees 'offset approach' for 747 long haul aircraft, putting the 'touchdown point' back to the end of the runway and having planes 20 metres lower over Jerrabomberra. They further say they will have 20 aircraft movements of large freighters or international flights each hour between midnight and 5 am.

This significant increase in aircraft activity means that the ANEF 20 contour is enlarged significantly and the high school cannot be built on the Poplars site as it is now inside the ANEF20 noise contour.

Typically airports provide 20 year forecasts in their master plans, not the maximum the airport could possibly handle. This PUC ANEF is not used by any other airport in Australia. Air Services technically endorsed the PUC ANEF on 12 June 2008, but through out this process no one was able to independently validate the data that went into the PUC ANEF as the Canberra Airport provides this data to Air Services and refused to provide the data to Queanbeyan City Council or the NSW Government for independent validation. There was nothing that Minister Sartor, NSW Government, Queanbeyan City Council or our elected Federal and State politicians could do.

It is our view that any system must have checks and balances.

The proposed school site has now been relocated to another site in the Valley. Consequently, as a result of the airports manipulation of the ANEF system, Queanbeyan gets the second best planning option and Canberra Airport will never achieve their 2050 aspirations.

Protection for our community

Our community was approved for development prior to the Federal Government sale of the Canberra Airport. Most residents purchased in the area prior to the 2005 Canberra Airport Master Plan being released, where the concept of a freight hub was first documented for the public. The proposed 24 hour freight hub represents a quantum leap in the operation of the airport which could not be expected to be within the consideration of current or potential residents. Furthermore, we are concerned that once the new terminal is constructed, that we will be exposed to the late night flights of international jets that miss the Sydney airport curfew and currently land in Brisbane.

The impact of the 24/7 freight hub as well as night time international flights will significantly impact on Jerrabomberra. The Canberra Airport states in their draft 2009 master plan "These figures demonstrate that no residents within the ACT, and only a few within Jerrabomberra, will be exposed at any time to noise over 65dBA as part of a freight hub".

We currently experience a low level of background noise (below 30dBA during the night). The World Health Organisation research indicates that sleep is disturbed with resulting health concerns at levels of 35-45 dBA. Aircraft noise events of 65dBA will disturb the whole Jerrabomberra and Canberra community. This is a fact as we currently experience this when passenger jets land after 11pm. A recent example is when Jerrabomberra residents were woken at 0200 hours on 31 March 2009 from a Tiger A320 producing 74dBA at the Jerrabomberra noise terminal. This plane woke up residents across our suburb including those inside the current Noise Abatement Area.

The Canberra Airport promotes the Required Navigation Performance (RNP) curved approach to provide noise relief for Jerrabomberra residents. The RNP only applies to Qantas 737-800 aircraft currently just one to two flights a day, depending on weather and crew ability/choice, so many flights continue to use the runway centreline. The Qantas 737-800 fleet only use the RNP approach for about 35% of arrivals.

The airport was the guest of the JRA at our April meeting to specifically discuss their 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan. In excess of 100 concerned residents attended this meeting. During the presentation Noel McCann Director of Planning Canberra Airport, spent a significant amount of time speculating to our community on moving flight paths away from Jerrabomberra into the Jerrabomberra Valley. He spoke at length of having more planes landing from the north and more planes using the RNP approach. This is will never be a reality as the majority of the planes will continue to use the ILS for safety and weather reasons, as is the case now.

It is the position of the JRA that Canberra Airport is a regional inner city airport servicing the local community, and as such, it must continue to operate within this framework. The Airport's desire to operate as a 24-hour freight hub and become Sydney's second airport should be curbed with a legislated curfew between the hours of 11.00pm and 6.00am. We believe this is the only way to protect the interests of the Canberra-Queanbeyan community and ensure we will be able to sleep at night without the intrusion of aircraft noise.

In summary

The JRA asks that:

- That a 11pm-6am curfew be implemented at Canberra Airport with similar regulations as Sydney Airport. We do not want to be the dumping ground for Sydney's aircraft noise, nor a 24/7 freight hub.
- Airports required to provide all technical data used in an ANEF for independent assessment when request by a Government Minister.
- Consideration to allow Schools within the ANEF 20 if the ANEF was produced with out-of-school hours traffic, Planning Minister to have approval powers.