

15/8/09

MR. Nicholas Dowie,
Planning Policy + Environment Section,
Airports Branch, Dept. of Infrastructure, etc.

156 Goyder St
Narrabundah

A.C.T. 2604

Dear Sir,

We would like to comment on the "Safeguards for airports and the communities around them" discussion paper as regards aircraft noise. We are extremely concerned by Canberra Airport's proposed expansion plans, and would definitely like to see a curfew on nighttime flights imposed from at least 11 pm - 6 am, preferably even 10 pm - 6 am or 11 pm - 7 am, so that we can get a good night's sleep. As members of the local community we feel we have a right to that, undisturbed by aircraft taking off, landing or flying overhead.

At present (before any expansion), we can clearly hear ^{the roar of} planes taking off from 6 am onwards, and planes flying overhead throughout the night often wake us up with their loud drone. How much worse will that be if Canberra Airport gets its way and turns itself into a 24 hour freight hub with flights on average every 3 minutes night and day? Many of these planes will be bigger and louder than now, so the noise will carry further across the suburbs. At present, ^{night} background noise in Canberra is ~~is~~ about 30 dB. Most people wake at 40-45 dB, and some aircraft have already been recorded over Canberra at 65-70 dB. There are local laws for noise pollution in the A.C.T. but no laws to protect our sleep from aircraft noise.

Studies in Europe have shown a link between night-time aircraft noise and high blood pressure, even if you don't wake up (European Commission's "Hyena" study at www.hyena.eu.com.) In 2005 Dr. Norman Swan said that a 3 country study of the effects of aircraft and traffic noise on young children significantly affected reading, comprehension and some aspects of memory.

I tend to be a light sleeper as it is and will definitely suffer from further sleep disturbance caused by aircraft noise. I am nearly 60 years old and ~~am~~ self-employed as a gardener and landscaper. I need a good sleep (preferably at least 8 hours per night) to continue to do a very physical job for 8-9 hours a day. I am often using power tools, including a chainsaw, so not being

tired at work is essential for my health and safety. My wife is disabled, a sufferer of M.S. for over 30 years. A good night's sleep is essential for her - it takes her several days to recover from a poor night's sleep.

Judging by the current level of aircraft noise (before any expansion), we will be severely affected by any expansion, but particularly at night, as will thousands of other Canberra. As a community, we have an expectation that sleeping hours will not be disturbed by aircraft or any other noise. A noise standard therefore needs to be established, respecting the evidence of the noise level at which disturbance to sleep occurs. We surely have the right to enjoy our residential amenity at night-time in peace and quiet, regardless of the expansion plan of Canberra Airport.

Could you also please pass on our health concerns to your Minister in the lead-up to his decision on whether to impose a night-time curfew on Canberra Airport, so that, as a community, we can have some safeguards put in place.

Yours Sincerely,
Josie and Peter Cornhill.
