

Nicholas Dowie
Planning Policy and Environment Section, Airports Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
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Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Dowie,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the discussion paper 'Safeguards for airports and the communities around them'.

I address my comments specifically to that of aircraft and airport related noise.

This is an issue that is affecting an increasing number of people, with both the increase in Australia's population and continual increase in passenger and freight flights.

Aircraft noise can affect both the amenity and health and safety of people in affected areas and current measures do not adequately protect people from increased noise. Night-time exposure to aircraft noise is particularly detrimental to public health.

Accordingly I commend the Government for considering this important aspect of aviation operations.

I agree that there is a need to "develop and implement additional strategies for assessing and managing aircraft noise" **and** "at much greater distances from airports than has conventionally been the case. Page 7.

I live in an area currently affected by aircraft noise to and from Canberra Airport.

The lessee of the Canberra Airport has proposals for substantially increasing both passenger and freight flights, and, of greatest concern, increasing the number of night-time flights but this is an issue for other areas as well as Canberra. I am greatly concerned about these proposals and do not consider that the current planning and approval arrangements will satisfactorily protect me from the potential significant loss of amenity nor threat to my health from these developments.

I agree with the government further developing options as out lined on page 7 of the discussion paper. In particular:

- Developing stronger arrangements for protection of corridors under flight paths, particularly avoiding residential and other noise-sensitive development in such corridors;
- Considering more conservative criteria for noise-sensitive developments under flight-paths, particularly in relation to development of greenfield sites or where other options are available;

I consider that the last dot point be amended as per my bold insert below:

- Considering special arrangements for state and local government consultation with the Commonwealth government on proposed developments around federal airports so that the impacts **on and from** airport operations can be fully assessed and taken into consideration in decision-making.

I also consider that 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).

In relation to the questions posed in the discussion paper on page 8:

4. How can the current planning arrangement to address developments in noise-affected areas around airports and under flight paths be improved to take account of community expectations, while also providing for the reasonable growth of aviation activity at airports?

The current planning and approval arrangements seem to be quite deficient as there is no imperative for the concerns of residents or indeed Councils to be taken into account, nor is there a statutory role for the Minister for the Environment. The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has the delegation to approve Airport Masterplans and, though he must consider public submissions, he is under no obligation to reflect these in his decision-making.

I consider that there should be a statutory role for the Minister for the Environment to be included in assessment of impacts of development at Federally Leased Airports. In this way the environmental health and social aspects of development at these sites must be properly considered. This is no reflection on the current Minister for Transport etc just a statement of a flaw in the process.

There should also be a better process for communication with local councils and state planning authorities with respect to airport and airport related development.

Environmental and health and safety concerns and the impacts of an airport's operation extend well beyond its physical boundaries.

5. For developments around the major capital city and freight airports, should state governments have to refer residential development within a defined buffer zone to the Commonwealth Transport Minister or Secretary for approval?

I am not sure if this is the solution thought is does have some merit, however I am sure that there should be more meaningful communication with respect to residential development around airports between the three levels of government. In greenfields or almost greenfields airport development, there should be substantial buffers around the airport from residential development.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Pulsford

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