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Nicholas Dowie
Planning Policy and Environment Section, Airports Branch
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local
Government
GPO Box 594
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Dear Mr Dowie,

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.

Yours sincerely,



Silke Speier
14 August 2009