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26th February, 2009

SUBMISSION

to

National Aviation Policy Statement

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development and Local Government
G.P.O. Box 594
Canberra, ACT 2601

Greetings

There is no pursuit that I know of that has more negative impact on large populations of citizens for the benefit of a few than aviation. Though the uninformed may consider small aircraft as less of a problem, in our area they are the worst. Their craft do not employ noise reduction as it would interfere with maximum performance and my understanding is they are “self regulated” in that regard. A small plane leaves a path of extremely obnoxious noise. Depending on prop pitch, RPM and engine style, a swath 5 kilometers wide in every direction would be average.

Small craft are particularly **under regulated** and recent events prove that out. One can not dispute the facts on this. Yesterday two small craft crashed, both with loss of life. One in remote north Queensland, the other near a residential area in Victoria. In the latter incident, witness reports (both crashes reported by ABC web site) indicate the pilot was performing stunts, “loop the loops” over a residential area and lost control. The plane narrowly missed homes. What kind of a person would perform hazardous maneuvers over homes and schools? A responsible

professional? A rhetorical question I assure you. We have been seeing it every day here for some months now. I have seen aircraft less than 50 feet (15 metres) over the roof of a house here in Hervey Bay. That was wing number VH ***, an aircraft operated by local company “***”. No one does anything about it.

We bought this property about 18 months ago. At the time we carefully researched all matters having to do with the properties suitability for our use, including the possibility of aircraft noise. We are 6 kms from an airport and off to the side from what was the documented, mapped and publicized flight path. Craft had been directed over Hervey Bay, which is in a direct line from the air strip and only 2 kms from the airport. The noise was never heard from this property. Then it changed, overnight.

I tell this to illustrate the great weakness in aviation regulation in Australia. That is, the worst problems have a simple cure and yet people are victimized for the frivolous interests of aviation.

ASA and CASA are proponents for the aviation industry and recreational flyers. If a local group of recreational aviators, small craft tourism operators or an airline wishes anything it is only the local airport operators standing between them and the residential victims. Most regional airports are council operated and they in particular are not up to the job of management of such an enterprise when the information they use to manage is brought to them by these agencies.

The role of CASA and ASA needs to be restructured back into a regulatory agency. This is a fundamental fault. The rest of the world already knows this. It does not escape attention that Qantas is not the airline it once was.

***. I can attest that the Whitsunday Islands charter sailing fleet is far more regulated than aircraft. That's sick.

Australia has been lucky, only a few people dead as a result of under regulation so far. Not enough for people to understand yet how unnecessary it is. The first really ugly event, when many innocents are killed and people demand to know why...? Government will not be able to provide a satisfactory response.

Right now everything is in the hands of aviation and they have proved their inability to consider the other people on the planet.

Control of aviation must therefore, be put in the hands of persons not beholden to the industry. Balance must be restored.

In a restructured or new agency, the first question that must be addressed in consideration of any aviation matter is how this endeavor can be designed to prevent inflicting damage on innocent parties. Until and unless this comes about, airports, especially regional airports will be hated by the many for the convenience of a few. Is that what this government wants for the country?

If you wish to “protect” your airports (I wonder at how that phrase is used) then the best thing you can do, the thing that costs the least, is to insure that flight paths and other relevant issues are managed in a way that damages the local community least. A matter currently ignored at many airports.

Wherever possible, airports should be moved to better selected areas and as soon as possible. There are numerous situations where airports have expanded their use to the detriment of the community, again, for the benefit of the few. The longer you wait the worse it gets.

New airports should never, ever be considered for a location that imposes on the existing residents. If it is not possible to find a place for an airport that doesn't create angst, that should tell one something...

Airports are not an imperative. Their cost in money, resource, pollution and human suffering is high. Australia probably has too many now for those costs.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Robert Norson