

Sent: Thursday, 26 June 2008 5:23 PM  
To: Aviation Statement  
Subject: Essendon airport

Good Afternoon,

I been following with interest the latest efforts to close Essendon Airport. I'm sure that you have received various arguments from both sides of the argument as to the merits of both parties' positions. I will make my position clear early on here in that I am opposed to the closing of the airport. Besides the obvious reasons brought forward for Essendon's closure such as noise/air pollution (which are far exceeded by the Calder and Tullamarine freeways) and 'safety' (the citing of accidents which occurred in the 70's and beyond in the absence of recent such accidents is a highly flawed approach for obvious reasons and in fact only strengthens the airport's current day safety record), there are therefore other facets that need to be looked at:

With the main 'campaign' against Essendon being led by local residents, the obvious place to start is that of Caveat Emptor (Buyer Beware).

Without prejudice to other defenses on behalf of Essendon airport, the airport was there long before the residents and around the time residences were constructed close the airport, it was far nosier.

Similarly, recent purchasers of existing properties in the area did so "with eyes wide open" as to what and where they were purchasing property. If this is translated into any other retail product, the chances of successfully overturning a fundamental aspect related to that product well after the point of sale would be highly unlikely. Unless of course it relates to safety and/or newly established negative attributes etc which in this case are not applicable. As the residents have pointed out, one has to go back a long way to obtain legitimate examples of accidents and as pointed out earlier, the changes in aircraft types handled at Essendon has resulted in lower noise and air pollution levels compared to the same timeline that these accidents are cited.

Another case that correlates quite well with this one, is the widening/deepening of the marine approach channels in Port Philip Bay.

Here is a massive project with many highly emotional issues, that in fact will add very little to the actual scheme of things as the aim/justification of the widening/deepening is supposed to allow larger post panamax container vessels to utilise the Port of Melbourne. This is in fact misguided for the following reasons:

- Most of the individual berth space (length overall) in the port is defined and not able to be increased. Putting longer post panamax vessels (10000teu) alongside 1 and a half berths is still not as efficient as having 2 panamax vessels (6000teu, total 12000teu) occupying 2 berths.
- Even were the berths somehow extended (doubtful), the infrastructure around the port cannot handle the increased volumes anyway without severe disruption and implications for properties in and around the port.

There are many more points re this which I will not go into, but in essence, the channel widening/deepening is simply creating a larger bottleneck. However, given this project was still Govt approved, it would fly in the face of reason to for the Govt to then endorse many of the very arguments brought forward, by those opposed to the channel deepening, against essendon airport which actually does have a practical and sustainable use, unlike the new channel...that would be a severe case of double standards and one that would certainly be brought into the spotlight were it to happen.

Once you close a sea or airport, it is gone and will never return regardless how strategic it was. Australia has few enough of both that it cannot be allowed that an opportunistic minority of residents (no doubt gently nudged by developers standing in the shadows) can dictate terms such as these based on flawed and outdated information when their view is contrary to the common good. The Govt approved the channel deepening using very similar words to my last sentence...

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