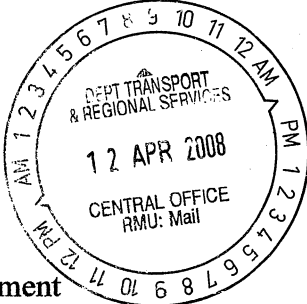


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DRAFT SUBMISSION FROM DVCA

Towards a National Aviation Policy; Issue Paper 2008.

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government
 GPO Box 594
 Canberra ACT 2601

We wish to comment on the following sections of the Issue Paper.

2.1 Airport Planning & Development

n “ are the planning & development mechanisms under the airport act working effectively?”

Clearly the answer is NO. There have arisen numerous small bodies of residents who live near airports, formed to try and get some input into airport planning and development issues. These bodies have formed because of a lack of input from regulated government departments. Little notice is taken of these concerned groups , by airport lease holders and developers, because they have no “teeth” in terms of regulations or planning controls.

n “ How can we improve consultation with local & State authorities and with the community?”

At the very LEAST, planning controls for non aviation development must be vested in Local government and , to a lesser extent, State government. It is ridiculous to have developers constructing buildings on airport land that Councils do NOT consider appropriate for the area . They ignore State legislation [eg Green wedge zoning] and local residents have no say at all. Attempting to get the Federal government to understand the local issues involved is invariably a waste of time!. Non aviation developments at airports are best overseen by Local government which has an overall view for appropriate, balanced development in the whole municipality, not just the airport. Off airport commercial competition issues can be more effectively handled by Councils if they have control over on airport development

n “How can the mechanisms for guiding development around airports be improved to ensure issues of aircraft noise are fully addressed in planning?”

Currently, little notice is taken of affected resident’s concerns, by airport lease holders, as they know local or State government cannot control issues of noise, flight paths, numbers of aircraft etc., nor can they be penalized for breaching community agreements.

Planning of developments MUST include affected residents, either by local government representation or directly [by a committee] with some assurance , such as an appeal process, of having meaningful input.

n “how can the protection of communities around airports from undue noise best be addressed as demand for services continues to grow?”

- a. Construct new airports away from urban development.
- b. Up grade existing rural airports.
- c. Utilize rural airports near the coast for pilot training, where the necessary but continuous takeoff/ circuit/landing/ takeoff etc. activity can proceed over mostly vacant rural land or coastal ocean [eg Cranbourne airfield]. This would, for example, significantly reduce the number of aircraft movements at Moorabbin airport and reduce resident’s complaints

3. Airport Safety

Adequate open space MUST be preserved on airport land. The pressure from developers to commercially exploit all available airport land must be resisted. There are already many reports of aircraft [mainly light aircraft/helicopters] either crashing or emergency landing in and around suburban airports.

Developments such as golf courses, on airport land, allow some commercial use and still provide open space in an emergency. Building wall to wall factories does NOT.

There needs to be some balance in the type of non aviation development allowed on airports.

Off airport building height should be regulated by Local government/ CASA co-operation to prevent compromising the safety of flight paths.

4.2 Aircraft noise.

Residents do not usually complain about the number of flights but about the noise of flights. Whilst the two are related, if aircraft noise emissions were significantly reduced, the number of aircraft movements would be less of an issue.

A requirement for noise suppression devices on ALL aircraft offers a partial solution. As noted in the Issues Paper, newer planes MAY be quieter however, if, as is also noted, the average age of the general aviation fleet is over 30 years, obviously most aircraft are of the “noisy variety”.

Quieter aircraft would result in less complaints and less need for any curfews. If aircraft owners cannot or will not fit noise reduction mufflers to their aircraft, they should be restricted to using rural or more isolated airfields

Whilst we recognise the performance of some aircraft may be reduced by fitting noise baffles, we believe the overall community benefit outweighs any such reduction.

We do not drive F1 cars around our streets, we have cars with mufflers. The same principle should apply to aircraft!

Helicopters are far noisier than fixed wing aircraft. During training, while fixed wing aircraft require a runway to do their circuits, helicopters do not. An alternative area should be found for helicopter circuits while still allowing them to be based at the airport. This will increase the costs of their operation but significantly reduce the noise for residents as it will be limited to normal arrival and departure levels.

n “How effective are current noise enquiry & noise complaint services?”

NOT VERY! Neither the EPA or CASA appear at all interested in aircraft noise complaints. Air services Australia would appear to be relatively ineffectual, partly due to the inherent difficulty in identifying individual aircraft [impossible at night for the average person] or assessing height variations, correct runway departures or other breaches of regulations.

n"Are there more effective ways to deal with peoples complaints and information requests?"

Suburban airports need to have a complaints officer at the airport so that immediate action can be instituted to address a noise problem. Reporting a noisy aircraft and having it investigated a week later is useless. A "hot line" for complaints /information should be available for each suburban airport , for the hours the airport operates.

Such an officer may be part funded by the airport lease holder, the pilots who use the airport and the local council and have other duties, such as providing information, to defray the cost.

g The Dingley Village Community Association.

D. MADILL.