

Ainslie, ACT 2602
6/6/08

Dear Sir/Madam,

Recently I received in my letterbox a leaflet requesting me to lobby your department on the issue of the expansion of Canberra Airport and to request there be a curfew on planes flying into Canberra between the hours of 11pm and 6am in order to ensure Canberra residents have sufficient respite from aircraft noise to get the sleep that safeguards health.

I scorn to request so small a concession. The very idea of expanding Canberra airport to take jumbo jets up to a capacity aircraft movement of one plane per two minutes is stupid, and vainglorious.

This part of SE Australia has lost six inches of rainfall in the past forty years, and with the present renewal of a drought pattern in our rainfall, the idea of bringing large numbers of people and goods to this city to place extra burden on that resource is dim-witted, and raises suspicion on the motives of those who will profit by this.

The idea that a single facility, air-travel, should, with its constancy of noise, so dominate the everyday consciousness of peaceable citizens, certainly corrupts the reasonable ideal intended for the serene conditions of urban and suburban living in the original conception of this city. Air-traffic crescendo, particularly at take-off, will raise the level of uproar and tension that bear upon the quality of attention people bring to their everyday living. It will not just disturb the peace, it will destroy it in its very fabric.

Like all my fellow citizens I have a right to peace. Partly it is necessary for my livelihood, which needs serene conditions in which to bring concentration to bear on difficult substance. And partly it is my entitlement in order to enjoy, in their natural context, those things of The Creation I find around me.

How dare developers and planners scheme to rob me of that. It is a violation of commerce on the fair conditions of living, and if that violation is legitimatised, how quickly the proposition arises that a case for counter-violation becomes compelling.

The developments that have already taken place with respect to Canberra Airport's expansion have contributed to the degradation of this city in recent years. They have created a stupid daily traffic snarl along the roads from the airport by entangling airport traffic with that of the commercial developments there. They have infringed upon pastoral Pialligo, and they have blocked the view of the pleasant Kowen hills with yet more blockish buildings from what is hitherto the world's most abysmal architectural era. The jumbos will bring extra noise, and extra ozone-destroying exhaust fumes to our region, thus contributing to the global destruction of that protective layer.

And all this will be done as fuel costs skyrocket, with the consequences even a non-economist can foresee.

I urge the entire abandonment of the expansion plan, and the return of Canberra to its original concept, a modest, but no less attractive centre for government and administration in a country that already has its natural capitals well-established elsewhere. To turn these lovely, austere valleys into a metropolis with a metropolitan airport, is greedy, stupid vainglory in a part of the world without natural resources, or significant manufacturing and commercial base.

Yours sincerely, Alan Gould