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The Hon Anthony Albanese
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

My dear Minister *Anthony*,

At the outset I would like to thank you and the Australian Government for embarking on the development of the first ever national policy statement on aviation. This highly important and timely initiative is of relevance to all urban areas in Australia including or located in proximity to major airports.

As you would expect, this initiative is of particular significance to Brisbane City Council (Council) given the unprecedented population and economic growth in Brisbane and South East Queensland. Brisbane is in the heart of the fastest growing region in Australia. So Council and the Queensland Government must ensure there is a clear and highly effective framework for the planning. This should deliver an appropriate urban structure for the South East Queensland region closely integrated with an equally effective and timely process for the planning, financing and supplying urban infrastructure.

Brisbane Airport is located within the urban area of Brisbane, some 13 km from Brisbane's Central Business District (CBD) and within Brisbane's key transport corridor of the Gateway Arterial. The current Brisbane Airport Master Plan foreshadows, over the period of 20 years, massive expansion of Brisbane Airport including the construction of the Australian Government approved *New Parallel Runway*. The Master Plan also allocates a large proportion of the Brisbane Airport Corporation's (BAC) land for significant, non-aviation related, commercial development.

The Master Plan is unclear on what urban infrastructure will be required to support these developments and, consistent with the current objectives of the *Airports Act 1996*, focuses almost exclusively on the infrastructure proposed on the BAC land. The Master Plan does not deal with how the need for urban infrastructure generated by the growth of the airport's aviation facilities and by its aggressive industrial and business expansion will be met. It also makes no commitment to forging a partnership with the

Queensland Government and Council to ensure provision of the infrastructure requirements and the associated infrastructure funding arrangements arising from the development on BAC's land.

As I am sure you would appreciate, the current uncoordinated and highly reactive approach to the delivery of one of the prime economic growth areas of the State of Queensland is simply unsustainable. For the economic benefits of Brisbane Airport and of the South East Queensland region to be fully realised, a clear framework must be established for the partnership between BAC and all levels of government to ensure a responsible, coordinated land use and infrastructure planning, financing and delivery.

Over the recent years Council has consistently raised these issues with BAC and, since the early 2007, has documented its concerns as follows:

- i. in its submission to the inquiry into the *Airports Amendment Bill 2006* dated 17 January 2007;
- ii. in its submission of 6 February 2007 to BAC on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Major Development Plan for the New Parallel Runway at Brisbane Airport*; and
- iii. in the letter to Prime Minister dated 11 July 2007.

I enclose copies of these documents for your information and submit the following points for your consideration.

1. Airport operators should be required to prepare airport masterplans in close partnership with the relevant State and local governments. Airport masterplans should be integrated with the State and local government planning instruments.
2. The current requirements of the *Airports Act 1996* focus on consultation only and are therefore not sufficient to give adequate weight and consideration to matters raised by State and local governments. There is an urgent need to compel far greater involvement of these parties to ensure the outcomes for both the airports and the surrounding urban areas are optimised.
3. The process of shaping airport master plans should be underpinned by a rigorous assessment of the likely impacts of the airport's growth. This is particularly relevant to the provision of a range of infrastructure on the airport land and in its general locality.
4. Airport master plans must be complemented by an infrastructure works schedule for each infrastructure network affected by development on the airport land. The infrastructure works schedule should clearly specify the scope of the required infrastructure works on the airport land and beyond and the expected timing for its delivery.

5. The infrastructure works schedule must be complemented by a written agreement on the infrastructure cost sharing arrangements between the airport lessee, other infrastructure users and the infrastructure providers (typically State and/or relevant local governments).
6. An infrastructure agreement at the airport master plan level will remove the uncertainty and associated delays in the consideration of individual commercial development proposals on the airport land.
7. To ensure competitive neutrality, individual commercial development proposals on the airport land should be subject to the same planning processes as any other development proposal within the jurisdiction of the relevant State and local government area. This is a view that has been consistently held by State and local governments as well as peak industry groups.
8. Airport master plans and complementary airport operational plans should reflect a balanced approach to the protection of airspace in a manner that recognises continuing technological advances in the aviation industry, minimises impacts on urban communities and not unduly restrict urban growth. This is particularly relevant to Brisbane's CBD being the subject of a blanket building height limit of 250 metres AHD. The economic cost of this unnecessary and arbitrary restriction imposed by BAC is very significant.

As you may be aware, BAC and Council have, more recently, been working together to improve communication and, over the period of the last six months, have been pursuing an agreement on strategic land use and infrastructure planning and financing matters. This however has only been after a protracted conflict and, without an appropriate legislative framework a voluntary arrangement may not be realised.

You would also be aware that, in early 2008, BAC commenced a review of the Brisbane Airport Master Plan. Council has been keenly awaiting the commencement of this important project and looking forward to a productive partnership with BAC in this area. Unfortunately, I am seriously concerned that, despite the assurances of a commitment to a greater cooperation with Council, so far BAC has not demonstrated this commitment. There is a real risk that an opportunity for BAC and Council to demonstrate a responsible and effective engagement in the spirit of the discussions between both organisations over the period of the last two years, will be lost.

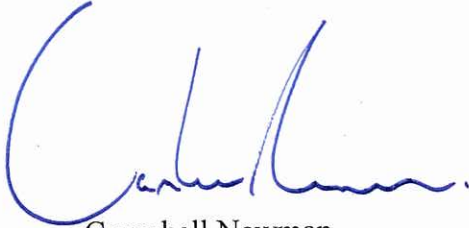
In essence, there appears to be neither a clear process for the formulation of the master plan nor the project plan that would unambiguously identify key stages of the project, the intended outputs, the stakeholder engagement and the associated time frames. So far, I have seen no proposals for a meaningful stakeholder consultation such as, for example, a formation of a key stakeholder reference group. I am concerned that BAC has already commissioned a number of studies without any opportunity for Council to offer a comment on the scope of the proposed investigations. I am also led to believe that Council may not be able to access the terms of reference for or the outcomes of some of these investigations.

I appreciate that the process BAC has adopted for the purpose of preparing the Brisbane Airport Master Plan may be meeting the relevant Commonwealth Government consultation guidelines. I am however seriously concerned that this process is not in the spirit of a best practice planning process or the spirit of on-going discussions with BAC regarding a greater level of cooperation between both organisations in the areas of land use and infrastructure planning and delivery.

I sincerely hope there is still time and scope for a meaningful partnership to be forged between BAC, Council and other key stakeholders as part of the preparation of the Brisbane Airport Master Plan. It would be of great concern to me if this unique opportunity was not realised. I therefore ask you to urgently consider your Department taking a leadership role in this process and facilitating the preparation of an exemplary master plan for Brisbane Airport. I am sure this experience will benefit not only Brisbane Airport and Brisbane city, it will also provide invaluable learnings that will contribute meaningfully to the shaping of the national aviation policy.

Thank you again for taking this important initiative and for engaging in an extensive consultative process. I look forward to a further dialogue with you and a real opportunity for Council to positively contribute to the aviation policy and the Brisbane Airport Master Plan 2008.

Yours sincerely



Campbell Newman
LORD MAYOR

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Encl.

cc:

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Infrastructure Australia

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