

Submission to Aviation White Paper, March 2023

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/aviation/aviation-white-paper>

I have lived in [REDACTED] since 1990. My submission concerns the operation of Sydney Airport, and in particular it's inability, or unwillingness, to manage aircraft noise.

Close to half a million Sydney residents are disturbed by the noise of aircraft arriving or leaving. The airport has set noise abatement targets for itself(!) that it never achieves. There is no consequence, and no responsibility admitted for these failures. In the late nineties it promised the imminent introduction of quieter planes that would significantly reduce the pain imposed on residents under its flightpaths. Never happened.

Aircraft noise is a recognised health hazard. In particular it harms the cardiovascular system (<https://www.the-scientist.com/features/how-environmental-noise-harms-the-cardiovascular-system-68786>). Aircraft noise is a public health problem.

In my house, the noise of arriving planes on flightpath A can reach more than 70dB in my lounge room, drowning out conversations and the television. Airservices Australia statistics show that noise at [REDACTED] exceeds 70 DBA around 100 times each day. (<https://aircraftnoise.airservicesaustralia.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Sydney-Airport-Operational-Statistics-Report-Oct-2019.pdf>) There are hundreds of thousands of similarly affected households to the north of the airport.

Airservices Australia publishes a statistic called "Respite": the number of full hours when there is no aircraft activity. In the year ending October 2019 (the last report available) in my area only 2% of all hours were quiet, the worst of any flight path area. The target for use of the north flightpath A is 17%, but it is routinely used twice that often. None of the other approaches exceed their targets. We're getting more than our fair share of noise.

The so-called curfew, applying between 11pm and 6am (and who could possibly need more than seven hours sleep?), has been steadily weakened by government legislation: relaxation of 'shoulder' (5am-6am) restrictions; 'business jets' excepted; cargo flights; small propellor planes. A patchwork of dispensations. Sure, there are less flights during the 'curfew' hours, but they are just as loud and disruptive. It's a Clayton's curfew: "the curfew you have when you're not having a curfew".

Sydney Airport needs to be properly regulated. Noise limits should be set by an external process and rigorously enforced. The curfew is much too porous, and must be strengthened. Give us at least 8 hours of rest, as per established medical recommendations.

It is also worth noting that Sydney Airport has paid no tax since it was privatised in 2002. The year before it paid \$54 million in tax. It is structured as a trust, a commonly-used tax avoidance trick. It is anti-social to its core.

It is clearly a rogue corporation, interested only in the maximisation of profits, and continued exploitation of its prime location in Sydney.

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