

## Submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Transport regarding the proposed Aviation White Paper Terms of Reference (TOR)

9 March 2023

It is very clear (including on the basis of Minister Catherine King's speech to the National Press Club on 1 March 2023) that your department needs to seriously consider its existing obligations under federal legislation in relation to aviation.

The draft TOR circulated for comment do not adequately reflect the requirement under *the Air Services Act 1995* for Air Services to "exercise its powers and perform its functions in a manner that ensures that, as far as is practicable, the environment is protected from: (a) the effects of the operation and use of aircraft; and (b) the effects associated with the operation and use of aircraft". Economic considerations should **not** be given primacy over the environment (including noise and water supply). Air Services and Minister King are on record saying that economic considerations outweigh anything else. Unless that fundamental premise changes, it seems that this process, as with the many others that I have participated in, including the PIR for Brisbane Airport, will just be another opportunity for government to tick a consultation box, while allowing aviation to continue to cause serious pain and suffering caused to the Brisbane community.

As a long time resident [REDACTED] in Brisbane, I have been trying along with many others in Brisbane, to get government to listen to our concerns about plane noise and emissions, since the NPR at Brisbane Airport was opened and started sending endless streams of planes over our houses. (I note that the PIR process and outcomes for Brisbane Airport, relied on by Minister King, Air Services and BAC, are basically useless – nothing has changed, except that more people in more suburbs are suffering).

It is incredibly disappointing to see that the TOR for the White Paper are focussed on growing the aviation sector. We were never asked the question, and do NOT want Brisbane to be an "aerotropolis", as BAC marketing now calls it. Yes, we want an airport and the ability to fly on planes. I am not anti-planes or politically aligned. But planes should not be allowed to operate at the expense of people's ability to live peaceful lives in residential communities around Brisbane. Thousands of people have lodged complaints and written letters raising their concerns but so far we have been ignored.

The current Terms of Reference fail to include aspects which would ensure that the community's issues regarding Brisbane Airport's noise and pollution problems are addressed.

I strongly support the submission made by BFPCA regarding the proposed Aviation White Paper TOR.

The TOR must:

1. overhaul the *Air Services Act 1995* to ensure regulatory independence and eliminate regulatory / state capture; and ensure that environmental and social considerations are taken into account, in addition to safety, efficiency and private industry profits.
2. adopt and apply standard criteria across Australian airports in relation to curfews, flight movement caps, and airport capacity declarations as provided for under the *Airports Act 1996*, Section 195. It is not reasonable or rational that some airports have these in place, and others don't. All of us affected by aircraft should be treated fairly.

3. adopt and apply genuine community engagement processes and impact reporting by qualified, independent experts across all jurisdictions regarding planned and ongoing airport operations. The consultation processes used by Air Services and BAC for the Brisbane Airport PIR have been an absolute joke. I have attended meetings and the reporting comes nowhere close to what happened at those meetings, and nothing has come of the community input and suggestions made.
4. ensure proper and evidence-based consideration of **all** issues of the impacts of aircraft noise and other pollution on mental and physical health, and develop strong regulation to achieve net aircraft noise pollution reductions.

I specifically note that the White Paper must achieve the following for Brisbane Airport:

- Reduction in noise pollution, including the urgent need for flight caps and a curfew at Brisbane's airport base (other major airports have curfews, and still manage to operate successfully). Noise sharing just spreads the pain to others;
- Set a maximum aircraft noise level not to be exceeded over residential areas of Brisbane, which should be well below what is currently waking sleeping residents under flight paths multiple times every night;
- Ensure aircraft use steeper landing and takeoff, to minimise noise for Brisbane's residents (the current flight paths are ridiculous, taking long detours and making planes sit very low over residential areas);
- Do not allow planes (including leaded aircraft from Archerfield airport) to fly over suburbs which are reliant on tank water – no-one can provide any reassurance that we are not being slowly poisoned;
- Make sure airports actually do what they say they will – BAC continuously misrepresents the % of planes that fly over the bay, despite repeated assurances that the NPR would reduce the number of planes overflying Brisbane suburbs. The stark reality is that the majority fly over land;
- Include consequences such as significant financial penalties when airports don't do what they say they will;
- Fund sound proofing and air conditioning including extra electricity costs for homes and schools in the vicinity of the airport, where it is not possible to stop planes flying over or nearby, with a levy on Airport profits;
- Consider the implications for children whose homes and schools are subjected to aircraft noise, with recent studies clearly identifying a link between noise, health and ability to learn;
- Overhaul or get rid of Air Services – it is clear that it is ineffectual and works only to support the aviation industry. Have a body and system in place that genuinely complies with its legislative obligations;
- Remove the policy of one complaint per person per month - every noisy aircraft for which a complaint is made should be recorded in official records. If noise complaints were appropriately considered and acted on, individuals wouldn't need to make multiple complaints;
- Ensure those responsible for managing aviation are accountable to affected communities – Ministers and others must be willing to meet peak aircraft noise groups; and
- Address conflicts of interest – eg government shares in BAC.

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