

Agenda item – D.Diamond 18/02/24

Introduction of noise-based fees for airlines flying into Brisbane Airport in 2024.

The recent back flip by Qantas on the installation of vortex generator modifications to its ageing A320 aircraft has once again highlighted that the industry and government continues to view Brisbane airport as a soft target where 'flying dirty' is the recognised and preferred industry practice.

The vortex generator noise abatement initiative was the simplest (and first) noise concession that could have been made by industry to the Brisbane community. A community that has faced total indifference and proven misleading conduct from the industry since the second runway project was first approved many years ago. Once again, the industry and government has failed to deliver.

Apparently, Qantas knows better than the rest of the aviation industry and produces a business case that is only believed by Qantas. An all too familiar trait, that is on public record, with flawed business cases that continue ignore social licence parameters that has severely battered its reputation with customers, employees, and the community in recent years.

It is widely recognised within our community that any voluntary code of "fly neighbourly," remains a foreign concept to the industry stakeholders operating at Brisbane Airport. This recent QANTAS decision is just another example that further strengthens this well-founded community perception.

At this point in time, to my knowledge, there are no Incentives (or disincentives) for Reducing Aviation Noise at Brisbane Airport. Upon enquiry with knowledgeable aviation practitioners, it appears that a significant number of leading international airports (such as Frankfurt, Zurich, Heathrow, JFK International, Schiphol to name just a few) have over several years successfully introduced noise-based fees for airlines. The list continues to grow yearly. They also advise that Australian airports are lagging well behind most other ICAO signatory countries that have adopted newer and more stringent ICAO noise standards in setting their noise-based fees.

I also note there are claims (unsubstantiated) that Australia has become a prime market for international airlines to on-sell older and noisy aircraft. One would have hoped and expected that our airlines are not operating as you may find in a third world country such as, Afghanistan. However, given QANTAS's recent decisions it would appear noisy aircraft remain a preference for Brisbane airport.

The community is fully aware that any QANTAS long term aircraft fleet purchase is purely economically driven due to their falling behind the rest of the world's leading airlines fleets. It has substantially higher aged aircraft than most of its competitors flying similar routes. We also know (and are fearful) of BAC's 24/7 freight cargo growth aspirations. An airline sector widely known for its noisy clunker fleets where the average age of the worldwide passenger carrier fleets is approximately 7 years, while their cargo counter parts have an average age of approximately 28 years; 4 times as old

Noise-based fees are;

- Simple to develop, introduce and monitor (unlike changed airpaths)
- Transparent to all in their management
- In use at the best airports across the globe – no precedent trailblazing is required
- In line with best practice 'Fly neighbourly' principles
- Have no impact on airport/airspace volumes or operating patterns

Brisbane airport's poor runway and airspace design dictate that it must use all practicable noise abatement strategies. There is absolutely no argument that that the Brisbane community deserves protection from operators who have continuously proven no regard for the noise pollution and health impacts for its communities.

Ideally, we would like to believe that the industry can be self-regulating. But history shows this is currently but a dream and Government needs to step up its protection of our community.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Brisbane Airport Community Airspace Advisory Board (AAB) recommend to the Minister to issue a directive for the introduction of global 'best practice' Noise-based fees at Brisbane Airport during 2024. These fees are to be based on the latest ICAO noise standards and highest global standards.