

Supplementary Submission to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee

Management of Aircraft Noise by Airservices Australia

Submitted by Dr Alan Lonsdale and Mrs Rosemary Lonsdale

This submission is supplementary to that dated 1 February 2010, and is a consequence of an information session on the West Australian Route Review Project held at the Shire of Mundaring on 3 February 2010.

Three specific issues are addressed:

1. The question of equity
2. Community consultation and the role of the Perth Airport Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee
3. Long term planning for Perth Airport

1. The question of equity; the establishment of equitable noise-sharing arrangements

From presentations by officers of Airservices Australia to the Mundaring Shire meeting, we gained the understanding that an important objective in introducing the new Perth routes was the achievement of greater equity; that the impact of aircraft noise would be experienced more equitably. Our impression is that Airservices Australia seeks to minimise the number of people affected by aircraft noise. In the case of the new Perth Airport Standard Arrival Route Julem Two the consequence is that a small number of residents are subjected to a huge increase in the number of flights, and greatly increased noise disturbance. In terms of Airservices Australia's statistics, fewer people are affected; the number of people affected by aircraft noise is minimised. However, the statistics do not appear to take into account the magnitude of the impact on these residents. This is *not* equitable; in fact it is the opposite.

We urge the Committee to take up this issue with Airservices Australia, to seek clarification of how Airservices Australia defines and operationalises 'equity', and to provide guidance on a more equitable approach.

2. Community consultation and the role of the Perth Airport Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee

The terms of reference of the Perth Airport Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee require the Committee to use "a consultative environmental assessment process" and to "inform existing and prospective owners of properties of aircraft noise impacts". It is clear that the Committee has totally failed in this regard, and that the community has no confidence in the Committee.

The Perth Airport website lists the members of the Committee, as of May 2007. This list is well out of date, making it difficult for community members to make contact with members. Concerning the role of Committee members in acting as a point of contact and information for the community, the Committee's terms of reference are unclear. The accountability of the Committee is also unclear: is the Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee a body

established by Perth Airport, or by Airservices Australia? To whom does it report? Who is accountable for its effectiveness?

Reflecting these problems, at the Mundaring Shire meeting an audience member suggested that Airservices Australia should establish a consultative mechanism that truly engaged the community and facilitated the consideration of different options. On behalf of Airservices Australia, Mr Richard Dudley (General Manager Corporate and International Affairs) stated that the existing Committee will continue to be the mechanism for consultation. This will further exacerbate the problem. We reiterate our earlier suggestion that Airservices Australia be required to introduce responsible procedures for informing and consulting communities affected by aircraft noise.

3. Long term planning for Perth Airport; an integrated approach

The Mundaring Shire meeting was presented with statistics that demonstrated the huge increase in air traffic and passenger numbers at Perth Airport over the past 3-5 years; growth that was far beyond the expectations of the planners. Given the mining and other developments occurring in WA and the huge growth in fly-in fly-out employment, it is clear that Perth Airport will be subjected to very substantial further growth in coming years, with obvious implications for aircraft noise disturbance. The aircraft noise problem can only get worse.

We believe there are real questions concerning long term planning for Perth Airport. While the terms of reference of the Senate Committee's are limited to the management of aircraft noise, this must be considered in the broader context of long-term developments.

In Perth, this need is rendered more complex – and necessary – by the constraints imposed by the co-location on the Perth metropolitan area of Perth Airport, Jandakot Airport and the military operations based at Pearce. An integrated approach is essential.

A number of questions raised by audience members at the Mundaring Shire meeting (for example, relating to air transport policy and regulations) could not be answered by Airservices Australia representatives, as these were the responsibility of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional development and Local Government. Again, the need for an integrated approach was highlighted, not only in relation to planning, but in the conduct of community consultation meetings such as this; it would have been helpful for a representative of the Airports Branch of the Department to be present.

9 February 2010