

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

PO Box 6100, Parliament House,

Canberra ACT 2600

14th June 2010

**Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and  
Transport from the Stop Parafield Air Noise group, regarding the:  
Inquiry into the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise**

The main issue we have with Airservices Australia is the noise monitoring which they conducted in 06/07. We concur with submission 178 by Martin Lewicki, which shows deficiencies in ASA's noise monitoring exercise. There are areas that experience higher noise exposures than those he measured in Pooraka and this is reflected in the noise complaint statistics and newspaper letters. Intensive pilot training should be moved away from residential areas.

**NOISE MONITORING**

Airservices is supposed to have expertise in noise monitoring but it appears that they assist the Airports in obscuring the truth with complicated statistics and partial truth. Following a large number of noise complaints from residents (600% increase) in 2006 a portable noise monitor was installed by Airservices at a school in Parafield Gardens. A lot of the noisiest areas are NW and NE of the main runway. There were several flaws with the data obtained because aircraft undertaking circuit training had transponders set to standby so the NFPMS could not correlate noise events.

- The majority of training aircraft was not included in the results
- Several of the noisiest aircraft were not recorded – including the Diamond DA-20, Grob G-115, Beech 200, Eurocopters, Robinson R44 and Warbirds
- Parafield Airport has over 20,000 flight movements per month in tower hours
- Only 1521 noise events were correlated in three months (Oct 06 – Jan 07) because transponders were set to standby and aircraft were a considerable distance from the noise monitoring terminal

Important additional data is not supplied on the internet version of report 1494 (attached)

Parafield's noise report 1494 has been used to tell Ministers and complainants that there is no problem. Quote from a Liberal Senators' correspondence in 2007, "Noise levels are constantly monitored by Air Services Australia. Please find attached the most recent Aircraft Noise monitoring report." There is no ongoing noise monitoring at Parafield Airport.

Despite all of the above, the noise levels that were reported exceed limits set by the EPA for other types of machinery. Why should we be exposed to levels of noise in excess of these standards without compensation – it is having a detrimental effect on health and our amenity. Noise exemptions granted for transport should not apply at training airports. There is also an extra annoyance factor associated with continuously droning propeller aircraft noise. An area traditionally rated as 15NEF suffers the same annoyance as the same area rated at 20NEF for jet aircraft. This does not reflect in the ANEF modelling.

We have no protection from the noise inflicted by a growing stream of aviation trainees. While helpful at larger airports, the Webtrack system does not offer residents near Parafield Airport any benefit and does not measure noise pollution from low flying circuiting aircraft. Low flying intensifies the noise over a smaller area.

**a) Has ASA conducted an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy with communities affected by aircraft noise?**

No – Not in our experience as residents of a noise affected community near Parafield Airport in Adelaide. We are not aware of any public consultation by ASA despite numerous complaints over the years for excessive aircraft noise and pilot harassment.

Since 2002 aircraft movements from Parafield have increased by 63% and large scale helicopter training is also increasing. Parafield Airport is predominantly a training facility for hundreds of foreign pilots. It is appalling that this training continues to be done over long established residential areas. We have experienced loud aircraft noise from circuiting trainees up to 11pm and often endured over sixteen hours of droning aircraft noise in one day.

The NEU has often advised complainants that the excessive noise was due to wind conditions, low cloud or a certain stage of pilot training. Complainants were advised to contact the Council, EPA and state Govt. All advised that it was not their responsibility and that we should discuss it with the Department of Transport who directed us back to Parafield Airport. Parafield Airport management took no responsibility for aircraft noise in flight and would not agree to any suggested changes. Trainee numbers increased substantially and so did the noise levels.

Airservices' Noise Enquiry Unit (NEU) staff gather complaint data and pass it on to the Airport. Noise statistics are presented at the quarterly Airport Community Consultation meetings where complaints appear to be ignored. Complaint statistics are difficult to obtain. Circuits are generally flown over the same narrow flight paths to concentrate the noise pollution over the same areas so it is common to have complaints from the same person. Airport management and Airservices often downplay complaints because they are from the same complainants. One NEU employee tries to demoralise complainants by persistently stating that the Airport activity is going to increase and suggested that the only option is to move if they can't tolerate the noise.

The area around Parafield Airport has a very high rate of house sales – over 2000 in 2009 and even more are rented out annually. This is well in excess of movement in other comparable areas of Adelaide – two to three times greater. Many residents are forced to move without compensation, but what is there to guarantee the area you move to will not become affected by aircraft noise when imposed flight paths change? I have read the submissions from many West Australian residents who have experienced this.

**b) engages with industry and business stakeholders in an open, informed and reasonable way**

Some Airservices staff do not engage with stakeholders in an open, reasonable manner. One example of this is at the quarterly PACC meeting in regard to discredit regular complainants. How ASA is funded, and spends government money would also be interesting.

**c) has adequate triggers for public consultation under legislation and whether procedures used by Airservices Australia are compliant with these requirements**

There is no effective public input to appropriate airspace allocation (Office of Airspace Regulation). Who would permit 450,000 aircraft movements mainly by trainees, or over 100 training overflights per hour in established residential areas? This occurred at Parafield Airport, without public consultation. Previous objections to the Airport's master plan have been ignored. Foreign aviation interests have more rights than Australians who live here.

Helicopter training for the Chinese Government was commenced in mid 2007. This was introduced without any adequate public consultation for the true impact of their plans to expand this business. The demand for helicopter training is set to expand and will make this area unliveable. There was an increase from 620 helicopter movements (cal year 2004) to 17,562 in 2009 and projections for 30 to 45 thousand per year in the future. Fifty percent of these could be twin engine helicopters. ASA stated that no environmental impact study would be required!

**d) is accountable, as a government – owned corporation, for the conduct of its noise management strategy**

Aircraft movements (especially flight training) should be conducted away from residential areas where possible. This does not occur around Parafield Airport so their noise management strategy is ineffective. No accountability is obvious. No one accepts responsibility for the noise problems.

**e) has pursued and established equitable noise-sharing arrangements in meeting its responsibilities to provide air traffic services and to protect the environment from the effects associated with aircraft for which it is responsible**

There is a significant difference between major airports and secondary training airports. Noise exemptions granted to the aviation sector should not apply to training facilities especially in residential areas. Noise sharing cannot really be applied at Parafield Airport due to limited airspace when circuiting and some runways are used more often than others. Direction 21 is used for 49% of the time and direction 03 is used for 26%. There is only one lit runway so certain suburbs such as Salisbury Downs are exposed to more noise at night. The noise of aircraft climbing then turning right above homes is very disruptive. The noise often continues without respite for several hours.

Residents near Parafield Airport have been complaining to Airservices since the early nineties and have generally been ignored. The noise problem was exacerbated when a runway to the

East was closed in the nineties and now all flight movements at night affect the western side of the Airport.

The effect of thousands of aircraft movements over a confined air space must have a negative effect on the environment. Avgas contains high lead levels and this would have an adverse impact. There are very high rates of cancer in suburbs surrounding the Airport and also high rates of mental health issues. The noise has a very negative impact yet ASA refuses to accept any responsibility. Airport management refuses to acknowledge the noise problem. Health and environmental aspects need to be given far greater priority over foreign investment.

**(f) requires a binding Community Consultation Charter to assist it consulting fully and openly with Communities affected by aircraft noise**

It is clear that the present system is not working effectively and requires change. Hopefully a binding Community Consultation Charter with binding compensation responsibilities may assist.

**(g) other related matters**

The Noise Enquiry Unit phone number has a lengthy preamble and a self promoting infomercial when you phone to register aircraft noise complaints. It is so time consuming and irritating that many have stopped calling to complain and it is much easier to use the internet form though many do not have access.

Suggestions have been made to have an option where complainants can bypass the long recorded phone message and leave a complaint, but this has not been implemented. Residents can have hundreds of noisy flights per day and night but cannot convey this effectively. It is important to have a complaint service and also a point of contact to notify intolerable noise levels at night and on weekends but we need more immediate response. It would also be beneficial if someone was actually empowered to provide a solution to complaints rather than advising us to contact our Federal member.