

Andrea Kaszick

VIC

6 November 2002

Dear Ms Kaszick,

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 November 2002.

Before addressing your specific questions it may be of assistance if I outline how Altona Meadows fits into the Melbourne aviation environment.

The suburb lies beneath a long established light aircraft corridor that allows aircraft to avoid the busy airspace associated with Melbourne Airport, an extremely important factor for this type of operation. It provides access into and out of Essendon and Moorabbin Airports, Melbourne's primary general aviation aerodromes, and is a frequently used transit route for light aircraft enroute to other locations. It also provides a safe route to and around Point Cook and Avalon Airports without crossing Port Phillip Bay, a major consideration with general aviation aircraft.

With regard to Point Cock it is worthy of note that the aerodrome is used frequently by flying schools based elsewhere which, of course, increases the number of transit flights in the vicinity of Altona Meadows. It is also home to the RAAF Museum which attracts many historical aircraft, particularly of WWII vintage. That, too, would increase aircraft activity in the

To address your particular queries I offer the following:

What caused the increase in planes in 1996?

Apart from the general growth in the aviation industry the only event that may have possibly affected traffic patterns in the area is the substitution of military flying with civil activity at Pt. Cook and Laverton around 1992.

Why is there a plane corridor over residential areas and why is it necessary to concentrate all light aircraft travelling East-West or East-North West into a narrow strip a few kilometres wide?

As mentioned above, the suburb lies beneath a long-established light aircraft corridor. The corridor was created in the late 1960's to provide a light aircraft route around the new Tullamarine (Melbourne) Airport and the associated airspace. Unfortunately Melbourne's relentless urban expansion has resulted in many more residential areas being built beneath these flight paths making it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to avoid such areas.

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 If the corridor is because of a Tullamarine exclusion zone why can light aircraft fly South through it from Essendon or wherever they are from and turn around and head back North?

There is no "exclusion zone" around Tullamarine although delays in obtaining a light aircraft clearance through the Melbourne Control Zone (CTR) can be experienced on some routes, east-west routes in particular. Special procedures have been devised, in conjunction with Essendon Air Traffic Control, to accommodate traffic wishing to leave the CTR to the north and south.

- Why is the number of planes increasing now?
  - Refer first dot point.
- Is it possible to increase the height at which these aircraft fly over residential areas?

Minimum operating altitudes are prescribed in Commonwealth legislation, specifically Civil Aviation Regulation 157 (encl). Changing such legislation would be a challenging task but you could begin the process by contacting the Civil Aviation Safety Authority in the first instance (ph 131757). Aircraft are permitted to operate over Altona Meadows between 1000 feet and 2500 feet without requiring an Air Traffic Control clearance.

I have enclosed an excerpt from the Melbourne Visual Terminal Chart. It's an aeronautical chart so some of the terms may be unfamiliar but hopefully the legend will assist. The recommended light aircraft coastal route is highlighted.

The low-level airspace in the Altona Meadows area has been designed, as part of the overall Melbourne airspace structure, to provide safe and efficient operations with the minimum of restrictions to general aviation aircraft transitting the area. Given the terrain, environmental considerations and airspace requirements that surround Melbourne it is difficult to see where an alternative route could be located that satisfies all the safety and operational imperatives associated with these operations.

If you have internet access you may be interested in some relevant sites providing information on aircraft noise regulations and procedures in Australia.

www.airservices.gov.au www.casa.gov.au www.dotrs.gov.au

Finally I can assure you that we do take our environmental responsibilities very seriously and are always endeavouring to minimise the impact of aircraft noise upon the community.

I trust this information has been of assistance. If you have further queries please don't hesitate to contact this office.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Rogers Executive Officer