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29 January 2010

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AIRSERVICE AUSTRALIA'S MANAGEMENT OF AIRCRAFT NOISE

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue.

Brimbank City Council is located to the immediate west of Melbourne Airport, and the Council is a member of the Melbourne Airport Noise Abatement Committee and party to the Brimbank Noise Meetings. Airservices Australia is also represented on both of these groups. It is in this capacity, and with our experience gained as members of these groups, that the following comments are made.

General comments:

- There appears to be a general reluctance by Airservices Australia to attend the Brimbank Noise Meetings. (Airservices have not attended the past two meetings.)
- Airservices are very slow in providing follow up information to both the Noise Abatement Committee and Brimbank Noise Meetings.
- For noise complaints at Melbourne Airport, the standard response is too often, 'it's the weather', or 'the direction of the wind required us to use that runway'. Those who have lived in the area for a long period and have lodged many complaints, feel that they are considered to be 'serial objectors' and their calls are treated as 'nuisance calls'.
- The web site and general access to Airservices is not user friendly for those with English as a second language and those who have no access to a computer.

Noise complaints:

- The noise complaints centre is located in Canberra, and operators generally do not know the area or the local issues.
- One phone call only registers one complaint – for practical reasons, the community will call the complaints phone line with a number of 'noise events'. This is registered as only one noise complaint. It is costly, time consuming and not always practical to make a

phone call for each noise event – eg. calling at 3am to lodge a complaint is not often viable.

- A typical response to enquiries into increased noise levels experienced by residents is that “there is no record of any flight path changes over this area since 2000”. This does not advise on any increase in air traffic.
- The issue of ‘noise sharing’ is generally ignored or dismissed.

The Council would actively support a requirement for Airservices to enter into a Community Consultation Charter, to ensure full and transparent consultation with communities affected by aircraft noise.

If you would like further information regarding any of the issues outlined above, please contact Catherine Hunichen from our Planning Department on 9249 4455.

Yours faithfully



LEIGH HARRISON
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER CITY DEVELOPMENT