

**The Committee Secretary**

**Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We support the Air Services Amendment Bill 2018. We do so in the context of the planned construction of Western Sydney International Airport at Badgery's Creek. The EIS for that project was required to consider the impact of 'all possible flight paths'. That is something it abjectly failed to do, considering the impact of only one set of flight paths, which included a single-merge point for all incoming aircraft over the Blue Mountains. After the release of the draft EIS the current government announced that it would not support the single-merge point, meaning that the final EIS presented its findings of an acceptable level of impact on the basis of no identified flight paths. The position of the government is that identifying flight paths is 'too complicated' to be done other than when construction of the airport is well underway. This is clearly a nonsensical claim.

This clear failure of the EIS process has severe implications for the quality of life of the residents of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, as well as for the environmental values of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. This is on top of the impact of existing overflights from Kingsford Smith airport. We are of course aware that communities and areas of great natural beauty throughout Australia suffer from the impact of aircraft overflights. Our enjoyment of the Royal National Park, the Bimberi Wilderness and the Jagungal Wilderness has been seriously negatively affected on recent visits by aircraft noise.

In the light of the above we ask parliament to consider the following suggestions as it deliberates on the Air Services Amendment Bill 2018:

1. that Environmental Impact Statements on the construction of new airports or the extension of existing airports be required in an enforceable way to consider 'all possible flight paths'. As this requirement implies, no construction of new airports or extension of existing airports should be

allowed to begin until flight paths have been identified and assessed for impact.

2. that communities likely to be affected by flight paths have the right to be consulted both at the pre-construction stage and while airports are operational.
3. that organisations concerned about the impact of flight paths on declared Wilderness, National Parks and other areas of natural beauty have the right to be consulted both at the pre-construction stage and while airports are operational.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to offer these suggestions.

Yours truly,

Stephen and Elena Fortescue