

27 January 2010

The Committee Secretary  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: INQUIRY INTO AIRSERVICES AUSTRALIA'S MANAGEMENT OF  
AIRCRAFT NOISE - SUBMISSION**

Thank you for providing Queanbeyan City Council with an opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry.

Queanbeyan City Council has actively been involved for many years in aircraft noise matters and has made various submissions on aircraft noise issues in the context of Senate, NSW Legislative Council reviews and/or Airport Master Plans. It is also a long standing member of Canberra Airports Noise Consultative Forum and is familiar with the various roles of AirServices Australia's management of aircraft noise.

Council's main submission is concerned with AirServices Australia's process for the endorsement for technical accuracy of ANEF's prepared by private airports. This is considered to be relevant to the following terms of reference for the Inquiry:

- has conducted an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy with communities affected by aircraft noise;
- has adequate triggers for public consultation under legislation and whether procedures used by Airservices Australia are compliant with these requirements;
- any other related matter.

**Process for Technical Endorsement for Accuracy of ANEFs**

The current process for AirServices Australia endorsement for technical accuracy of ANEFs is not transparent and relies primarily on studies and data prepared by privatised airports or consultants engaged by airports, with limited public consultation or opportunity for comment. This results in community concerns regarding the accuracy of ANEFs and the reasonableness of the underlying data used to determine the ANEF (such as forecast airport movements). It is Council's position that this reduces the ability of AirServices Australia to satisfy the above terms of reference and

undermines the ANEF system which the recently released National Aviation Policy White Paper substantially retains (pages 212).

The current process is outlined in AirServices Australia's Guidelines for the Production of Noise Contours for Australian Airports (Attachment A). This involves:

- Airport-Lessee Companies (ALCs) having a principle role in the production, consultation and finalisation of aircraft noise contours.
- AirServices Australia having narrow and restricted technical and administrative roles in relation to the input data and modelling used in relation to ANEFs.
- Consultation being limited to relevant State and Local Authorities immediately prior to technical endorsement by AirServices Australia.
- A lack of clarity in regard to the results of AirServices Australia review of any submissions.

The relatively narrow endorsement role of AirServices Australia creates potential for ALC's (who are likely to have major commercial as opposed to community interests) to overstate the needs of the airport at no cost or other disadvantage to itself but at enormous community cost.

To reduce this opportunity as well as to improve community confidence in the process for endorsement of noise contours, achieve greater transparency and accountability and improve the process it is recommended that the following procedures be undertaken:

1. The process for Technical Endorsement of ANEFs be clarified and included within legislation (possibly as an amendment to the *Airports Act 1996*) as soon as possible.
2. The legislation should include provisions which --
  - Require that the input data used be independently verified and checked by AirServices Australia before ANEF contours are produced.
  - Require the input data to be made available for verification during any public consultation period.
  - Require additional factors to be considered by AirServices Australia including the type of aircraft that should be used in the model, technological developments in relation to aviation, likely achievability of forecast flights, likely impacts of fuel costs, tourism, climate change etc as part of any process of endorsing an ANEF.
  - Provide for a consultation period in which the general community can comment as well as relevant State and Local Authorities and the ALC.
  - Require AirServices to assess and make recommendations on submissions in relation to the draft ANEF.
  - Ensure that the results of Airservices Australia's considerations are made available to the public prior to any decision.
  - Require Airservices Australia in the process for endorsement to consider and recommend the type of ANEF e.g. ultimate capacity ANEF, 20 year ANEF, etc for any particular ALC. In particular Air Services Australia needs to reconsider its support of ultimate capacity ANEFs given its view that ANEFs require review at regular intervals (about 5 years) to ensure their continuing

validity. (Airservices Australia Guidelines for the Production of Noise Contours for Australian Airports, page 1).

- Require endorsement of a draft ANEF to occur as part of a decision for a draft Master Plan. This would be consistent with the National Aviation Policy White Paper December 2009 action of strengthening Master Plans (pages 23 and 159 - 160).

### **Recommendation**

*That:*

- 1 *The process for Technical Endorsement of ANEFs be clarified and included within legislation (possibly as an amendment to the Airports Act 1996).as soon as possible.*
- 2 *The legislation should include provisions which –*
  - *Require that the input data used be independently verified and checked by AirServices Australia before ANEF contours are produced.*
  - *Require the input data to be made available for verification during any public consultation period.*
  - *Require additional factors to be considered by AirServices Australia including the type of aircraft that should be used in the model, technological developments in relation to aviation, likely achievability of forecast flights, likely impacts of fuel costs, tourism, climate change, etc as part of any process of endorsing an ANEF.*
  - *Provide for a consultation period in which the general community can comment as well as relevant State and Local Authorities and the ALC.*
  - *Require AirServices to assess and make recommendations on submissions in relation to the draft ANEF.*
  - *Ensure that the results of Airservices Australia's considerations are made available to the public prior to any decision.*
  - *Require Airservices Australia in the process for endorsement to consider and recommend the type of ANEF e.g. ultimate capacity ANEF, 20 year ANEF for any particular ALC.*
  - *Require endorsement of a draft ANEF to occur as part of a decision for a draft Master Plan*

### **Community Aviation Consultation Groups**

The White Paper indicates that part of its raft of actions will be formalised Community Aviation Consultation Groups (pages 23 and 160 - 163). Such groups should also include representatives of relevant State and Local Authorities and members of the community to consider aircraft noise issues.

However unlike the current Canberra Airport Consultative Forum which is chaired and facilitated by a senior staff member of Canberra Airport and held on the premises, a reconstituted Community Aviation Consultation Group should be facilitated, chaired and generally administered by AirServices Australia. This would potentially provide the new Groups with a good chance of achieving community confidence in their operation, together with improved transparency and accountability which will all enhance them.

## **Recommendation**

*That AirServices Australia facilitate, chair and generally administer the new formalised Community Aviation Consultation Groups.*

**Actions which AirServices Australia currently does well in the management of aircraft noise**

AirServices Australia currently performs well in relation to the monitoring of aircraft noise through the Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS).

The NFPMS compiles track density plots consisting of a map of the airport and its surrounds, displaying with colour coding the number of aircraft movements over the area surrounding the airport, over selected time periods.

It also includes quarterly reports that contain tabular and graphical summaries of noise and aircraft movement data for particular airports including Canberra. These reports include aircraft movement statistics such as runway usage by the various categories of aircraft and movement profiles.

However the Canberra Airport Quarterly Reports do not currently include diagrams indicating respite periods such as Figures 14.2 and 14.3 from the approved Sydney Airport 2009 (Attachment B). If these could be added it would increase the value of these documents and possibly community use.

## **Recommendation**

*That:*

- 1. AirServices Australia continue to maintain its Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS) including publication of its Quarterly Reports at least to its current level.*
- 2. If technically possible the Canberra Quarterly Report be expanded to include diagrams showing current respite periods.*
- 3. TNIP software be expanded to include Canberra Airport.*

## **WebTract**

The AirServices Australia management of aircraft noise WebTract system is considered to be an effective tool.

Webtract is a system providing the community with information on where and how high aircraft fly, as well as noise levels of these operations. It allows members of the public access to detailed information on aircraft operations around major airports.

WebTrak uses information from air traffic control secondary surveillance radars to monitor aircraft:

- Within 55 km of the airport
- Up to a height of 3000m above ground level.

Aircraft noise data is downloaded daily from noise monitors strategically located about the communities close to the airport.

The information is then displayed on a detailed map (road or aerial) which enables the user to zoom down to their street level.

In Current Flights mode members of the community can view current operations (delayed by 40 minutes for aviation security reasons) around the airport.

In Replay Mode members of the community can access flight information and noise data for the previous two weeks.

**Recommendation**

*That AirServices Australia continue to maintain its Webtract system at least to its current level.*

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 6298 0276 if you require further information.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Carswell', written in a cursive style.

DAVID CARSWELL  
EXECUTIVE MANAGER  
STRATEGIC PLANNING

cc General Manager  
Mayor

## **Attachment A – Excerpt from AirServices Australia’s Guidelines for the Production of Noise Contours for Australian Airports**

### **“3. Production of ANEFs**

In general, the onus to initiate the process for the production of aircraft noise contour maps rests with the airport owner.

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### **4. Review procedures for endorsement of contours**

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#### **Procedure 1**

For ANEF and ANEI contours, the review procedures which are overseen by Airservices Australia include the following technical and administrative checks:-

#### **Procedure 1**

- a) that the appropriate selection of aircraft types has been used as input data;
- b) that the runway usage and flight path data used as input to the model are operationally suitable;
- c) that the forecast numbers of aircraft operations are not greater than the capacity of the airport;
- d) that the contours have been modelled correctly.

Based on experience, it is strongly recommended that the input information on the above items be discussed and agreed with Airservices’ Environment Branch staff early in the process (i.e. before preparing contour charts).

#### **Procedure 2**

Following Airservices’ advice of the successful completion of these checks on the validity of the input information used to produce the contour set, the airport owner must then make a proposed ANEF contour chart available to the relevant authorities in State and local government for sighting and comment.

Any such comments are to be collated and returned to Airservices Australia for review, following which it can be expected that the contour map will be endorsed by Airservices Australia as the official ANEF for the airport.....

#### **Procedure 3**

The airport owner may then issue the contour map as the new and current ANEF for the airport.”

Attachment B – Excerpt from the approved Sydney Airport Master Plan 2009



