

Our ref LUPD2009/0032~0009

Chief Executive
5th Floor, Energy House
18-20 Cavenagh Street
Darwin NT 0800
Postal GPO Box 2520
Darwin NT 0801
Tel (08) 8924 7233
Fax (08) 8924 7044
Web www.nt.gov.au/dpi

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

Dear Ms Radcliffe

Thank you for your letter of 17 December 2009, inviting this Department to make a submission to the Senate Committee Inquiry into the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise.

For the Committee's information I note that due to historical circumstances, the role of Airservices Australia in the operation of the Northern Territory's Darwin and Alice Springs airports is less critical than in the other states.

Alice Springs Airport was established on a very large site to allow for dust suppression. A consequence of the large site is that exposure to aircraft noise, at least as represented by Aircraft Noise Exposure Forecasts (ANEFs), is almost entirely contained to airport land.

In contrast, large areas of private land adjacent to Darwin International Airport are exposed to the impacts of aircraft noise, but the airspace of the Joint User facility is controlled by the Department of Defence. One consequence of this is that Defence, rather than Airservices Australia, is responsible for implementing measures such as Noise and Flight Path Monitoring Systems.

It follows that this Department has no significant issues to raise with the effectiveness of Airservices Australia in response to those matters (a) to (f) that the Senate Committee is required to consider.

However, in response to (g) *any other matter*, it is of concern to this Department that Airservices Australia does not have a set process for the endorsement of combined civil and military ANEFs for joint user airports such as Darwin and Townsville.

In the Northern Territory, the NT Planning Scheme adopts the currently endorsed ANEFs as a land use planning tool to ensure that land in the vicinity of airports is not inappropriately developed. This task is made particularly difficult when the current 2024 ANEFs are neither long term nor inclusive of future military aircraft operations, and therefore substantially understate the future impact of aircraft noise.

Last year Darwin International Airport prepared, as part of its 2009 Master Plan, concepts for ANEFs out to 2049 which combined civil and military aviation; but apparently Airservices Australia did not have an approved process to endorse these combined concepts.

As a result the Master Plan has been extended to 2010 to allow the development of policy by the Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Department of Defence and Airservices Australia that will amend the Ministerial approval procedure for the endorsement of ANEFs.

I would very much appreciate the Senate Committee including this matter in its Inquiry, and recognising Darwin's urgent need for long term ANEFs that represent the combined future impact of civil and military aviation on the affected land, and give clarity and certainty to the Northern Territory Government as well as the relevant land owners.

Should you have any queries relating to the above, please contact Mr Chris Humphries, Project Manager on (08) 8999 6410.

Yours sincerely



ROD APPLGATE
A/Chief Executive Officer

25th January 2010