

Coalition of Resident and Business Associations

Carlton Residents Association Inc.; Collins Street Precinct; Docklands Chamber of Commerce; Docklands Residents Association; East Enders Inc.; East Melbourne Group Inc.; Flemington Association; Hosier Inc.; Kensington Association; Melbourne South Yarra Group Inc.; North and West Melbourne Association Inc.; Parkville Association Inc.; Parkville Gardens Residents; Residents 3000 Inc.; Southbank Residents Association Inc.; Yarra Park Association; The Pasley Streets Precinct Group; Wilkinson Publishing; Yarra Park Association

20 May 2018

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Air Services Amendment Bill 2018

This submission is made on behalf of CoRBA (Coalition of Resident & Business Associations) which represents community and business groups in the City of Melbourne. CoRBA comprises 19 organizations representing an area with a daily population of nearly one million people including about 150,000 residents.

CoRBA strongly supports the Bill as a mechanism for providing some relief to the many people in the municipality who are detrimentally affected by aircraft. We support the proposed requirement for Airservices Australia to prepare a plan for management of flight paths and air space in central Melbourne. We also welcome the obligation to minimise impact of aircraft operations on the human and natural environment, community amenity and residential areas, taking into account the human impact on affected communities.

Residents and other people in the municipality are severely affected by air traffic over Inner Melbourne, which has significantly increased without any consultation with the affected population. Aircraft fly over Inner Melbourne throughout the week and even at night but the frequency increases on weekends, with up to 150 light aircraft and helicopters over the area on some days. Many of these do multiple circuits and some have been recorded to fly 31 circuits over Inner Melbourne. In addition, there are frequent low helicopter flights over these areas and these aircraft often hover for extended periods to film events at the MCG or for traffic reporting and news. The noise and vibration caused by helicopters impact on people both outside and inside their houses severely affects the quality of life in Inner Melbourne.

To make things worse, now for over a year, large aircraft are flying over our residential areas 4-5 minutes before landing at Tullamarine. On some days large aircraft are passing overhead every few minutes, adding up to well over 100 per day. They use new “smart tracking” concentrated

flight paths over our suburbs, thereby creating noise ghettos or noise canyons, expressions which have been used in USA, where Senators are successfully fighting against this type of imposition on residents.

The aircraft issue started at the beginning of 2013 as a result of deregulation with no consultation with residents. Noise measurements done in East Melbourne have shown that at times the noise is as bad as living next to an airport. While community groups are consulted near airports, there is no mechanism for our community's voice to be heard, despite the severe impacts.

CoRBA is also concerned about the safety and security issues of unregulated air traffic over such a significant central area. On Derby Day 2014 there was a helicopter crash near the MCG. The threat of terrorism is a big issue, and there is no regulation of flights over such a densely populated area with large sporting venues and major hospitals and places of worship. The proposed legislation would provide controls to address this situation. It is relevant to note that many cities in the world, including Singapore, Paris and New York are banning such flights over their central areas.

Inner Melbourne residents have tried many courses of action including meeting with Air Services Australia and air traffic controllers, as well as writing to the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and writing to the operators and the airports. All these approaches have not remedied the problems and the authorities are unable or unwilling to give weight to the impact of the many flights on residents.

The City of Melbourne has initiated a 'Fly Neighbourly Agreement', which is a voluntary agreement with aircraft operators to minimise noise. This has had no noticeable impact, and has not resolved the issue, with several operators not supporting the agreement.

We strongly support the provisions of the Bill which require affected communities to be consulted and will provide a voice for affected communities by establishing an independent Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and an independent Community Aviation Advocate.

CoRBA commends the Bill to the Committee and urges for it to be passed into legislation.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Kennedy
Chair, CoRBA

www.corba.org.au