

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO AIRCRAFT NOISE

13 JANUARY 2010

My family and I live in Riverview where we are affected by the operations of the Sydney Airport "Third" Runway and, to a lesser extent, the operations of the Main North-South Runway. Prior to the opening of the "Third" Runway in 1994 we protested against the proposal to construct the "Third" Runway on the basis that:

- The underlying premise of the "Third" Runway Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS), that the least number of people be affected, was inherently flawed as, while all Sydney residents would "benefit" from the construction of the "Third" Runway, a small proportion of residents, including residents of Riverview, would be required to bear all the noise and pollution related impacts of runway operations.
- The projected number of aircraft using the north-south runways and the associated level of noise and pollution related impacts of runway operations in the RIS appeared to be significantly understated (which proved to be the case almost immediately after the "Third" Runway was opened).

Following the opening of the "Third" Runway with attendant high levels of noise and pollution, the Keating Government, without conducting any impact modelling, further concentrated the north-south flightpath requirements (the "Bennelong Funnel") which reduced even further the number of people affected. However, the people affected suffered to an even greater extent.

The Howard Government subsequently introduced a policy that the aircraft noise should be shared by rotating runway operation, fanning flightpaths out (instead of concentrating them) and using, whenever possible, flightpaths over water, especially Botany Bay. Curfews and limitations (caps) on the number of aircraft movements were retained. These measures greatly improved the conditions for residents under the "Bennelong Funnel".

However, in 2002, when the Howard Government sold the 99 year lease on the airport to the Macquarie Bank owned Sydney Airport Corporation, the *Airports Act 1996* stipulated that the airport lessee companies for Sydney Airport and any airport subsequently built in the Sydney basin (referred to in the Act as Sydney West Airport) must be wholly owned subsidiaries of the same holding company.

This inherently anti-competitive provision had the effect of increasing the price the Government received for the 99 year lease on the airport. However, it has also resulted in the lease holder, Sydney Airport Corporation, providing no support for the development of another airport in the Sydney basin while at the same time acting to maximise profit by agitating to have the Sydney Airport curfew and aircraft movement limitations relaxed so that more aircraft can use the airport.

Where I live, aircraft noise is an ever present and unwelcome part of our lives. We and many thousands like us are the victims of poor, short-sighted decision making by successive Commonwealth Governments. Consequently, my recommendations to the Committee are:

1. The Sydney Airport curfew and aircraft movement limitations must not be relaxed and should, in fact, be made more stringent.
2. Given the strong case that can be made on environmental and social grounds, the large increases in noise and pollution related impacts experienced by many Sydney residents and facilities (schools, hospitals, etc) since the construction of the "Third" Runway should be appropriately priced. Compensation should then be paid by the airport operator directly to these residents on an on-going basis. So far, only the most severely affected have been able to access noise mitigation funds.
3. The Government must engage with Sydney Airport Corporation and other relevant parties to accelerate the development of another airport in the Sydney basin. The proposed disposal of the Badgerys Creek site is clearly a great mistake.
4. Noise sharing principles must be retained. Furthermore, examination of Sydney Airport flightpath maps show that there is further potential for noise sharing. In particular, aircraft taking off to the north from the "Third" Runway generally make a sharp right turn soon after takeoff and overfly Coogee. Suburbs such as Randwick, Woollahra, Bellevue Hill, Vaucluse, Mosman and Manly, whose affluent inhabitants are heavy users of the airport, are largely unaffected by overflying aircraft. This situation is clearly unfair to the residents of Coogee and surrounding suburbs and should be rectified at the earliest opportunity.

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