

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Inquiry into the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise.
This submission is on behalf of myself Amanda MacCallum Skeates and my family. We live in Glen Forrest, Western Australia.

In August 2003 we moved to a little known area at the back of Glen Forrest on the Darlington border, to an area designated as Rural Landscape Living, these blocks vary in size from 2 acres to upward of 20 acres, all with one thing in common - the amazing peace and tranquility of a real rural lifestyle. I still have the real estate details for the property that we moved to (and would be more than happy to provide a copy to any interest parties), the caption is "Listen to the Quiet" - followed by "have you ever dreamt of living in total tranquility and serenity amidst natural bushland". This has been true for the last six years we have never had any air traffic with the exception of the occasional water bomber and an occasional light recreational aircraft - in fact the noise of an aircraft usually has us running outside to find out what is happening.

In March 2009 we first noticed an aircraft overflying our house at 5.30am, never before had any large aircraft flown over our property - on contacting Airservices Australia and submitting a complaint we were contacted and the operator suggested our only recourse would be to lobby for a curfew. At this point in time we were not aware of the extent to which our lives were about to change.

We used to wake up in the mornings to cockerels and native birds, but now we are constantly buzzed by aircraft. On 16 June between 5.30am and 5.00pm over 53 aircraft were audible and visible from our property (Barham Road) on their approach to Perth Airport - how can this happen? The figures for Glen Forrest in the month of May show a huge increase in air traffic, May 2008 - 259 Aircraft in the Glen Forrest area, May 2009 - 1105 Aircraft.

In an article in "The West" on 13 June 2009 a spokesman for AirServices Australia said "it was concerning if residents believed they had not been notified of the changes". "Concerning" is hardly the word that I would use, and I do not "believe" that I haven't been notified, I KNOW that I haven't been notified. The spokesman for AirServices Australia continued that "the suburbs concerned were not new to aircraft noise" - this is quite blatantly untrue and to be honest very insulting, has the spokesman ever lived in Glen Forrest or perhaps even visited Glen Forrest to see the rural lifestyle sustained in this community. Perhaps some residents close to the Highway may have heard the occasional aircraft landing over Swan View in the past, but that bears no resemblance to the constant noise we are now suffering and those of us living at the back of Glen Forrest have never heard any noise from either take off or approach.

My understanding is that approaches to Perth Airport have in the main been across Swan View and down Swan Valley towards Guildford, naturally the prices of property in this area reflect the fact that aircraft noise is present and a local search provides these details for prospective buyers giving them the opportunity to make an informed decision as regards buying a property in this area. A recent (25 May 2009) Local Authority Search for our property shows no aircraft noise, the footnotes do however state that "some properties within Bellevue, Greenmount, Midvale, Helena Valley and Swan View may be affected by aircraft noise contours from Perth Airport" - so quite obviously Glen Forrest was not affected. It would appear that this would confirm that The Shire of Mundaring has had no input with regards the change of flight paths and naturally due to these

changes the value of our property in both real living and monetary terms has quite simply plummeted, since the new "racecourse" pattern of approach to Perth Airport has been implemented. Whereas aircraft coming in to land over Swan View were "throttling back", reducing power all the time and therefore reducing noise over the suburb, the aircraft flying over Glen Forrest are having to keep power on to maintain height and increase slightly to bank round over Paulls Valley and as such engine noise is in fact increased. In my dealings with Airservices Australia it has become obvious that any information given to the PANMCC was given in such a way that the participants on the committee believed any air route changes were to take place well away from the now affected areas. In my email to Airservices Australia attached (1A) a number of questions and statements required answering ie:

I would appreciate a written response to this email explaining fully the process which was undertaken to ascertain the impact on communities from the redirection of flight paths, together with how AirServices Australia is planning to work with the communities to ensure that quality of life in the affected suburbs is returned to an acceptable level. We are supposed to live in a democratic country, can you explain how your actions reflect this?

The Perth Hills have long been known as a tourist attraction, offering people the opportunity to enjoy nature and as an escape from the pressures of working life - how do you feel the Perth Hills can be marketed to tourists when there is a constant drone of aircraft? Have you looked at how this might affect businesses - how many people would still wish to hold their wedding at Darlington Estate Winery (one of WA's premier venues with a beautiful outdoor setting) when their vows are constantly interrupted?

We are able to make out which airline is flying over us from the ground, why do the aircraft fly across Glen Forrest at such a low level, when they then have to fly down to Byford area before turning and commencing final approach?

Please advise which residents were contacted by WARRP and also which publications were used during the 3 year period to advise communities of impending changes.

Please advise when the next meeting of the WA RAPAC is due to be held as in the minutes of the meeting on 6 March 2009 it was noted the following with regards to a submission by WARRP: Late correspondence received by the Secretariat. Because of the detail contained the Chair deemed it appropriate that the matter be held over to enable the membership to review. The proposal was agreed.

Please also confirm when CASA approval was given for this new routing of aircraft.

You will note from the attached response from Airservices Australia (1B) that none of these items were addressed. In fact the letter is confusing, it would appear that the author does not know the exact geographical locations of the suburbs discussed and the tone of the letter is very condescending. The role of Airservices Australia in this instance should be to communicate clearly and effectively – at least have the common courtesy to ensure that you are talking about the correct suburbs. Why the flightpaths are now descending over terrain which is topographically well above sea level and extending a fair length of the Darling Scarp affecting numerous communities beggars belief. Where is the sense in this? It would be most interesting to know why the CASA suggested a need for changes, but apparently as affected communities we are not allowed to be privy to that information.

None of the minutes of the PANMCC show the affected communities, so how were the

committee members expected to know that the new routes would cause such an impact. The minutes in fact show very little about the WARRP and at no time was the impact on communities and wildlife highlighted. It has been many months since we have seen the red tailed cockatoos in the conservation block in Glen Forrest – previously they were abundant – an endangered species I believe. The peace has been shattered.

It is now unusual to get a whole nights sleep, the aircraft fly throughout the night and wake the family up regularly – sleep deprivation is a very serious complaint. It is also impossible to double glaze our block – we chose to live here for the outdoor lifestyle, even our dogs have been seen looking up at the aircraft as they fly overhead. We chose and researched an area to live very carefully, ensuring that there were no flightpaths, now our whole lifestyle choice has been ruined – many people within the area are discussing having to leave properties that they have built up over many years as the noise levels are unacceptable. The level of intrusion is quite simply unbearable.

To address the points to be considered by the Committee:

(a) has conducted an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy with communities affected by aircraft noise;

No there has not been an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy.

Airservices Australia appear to have done the minimum by using the PANMCC as their preferred forum. It would appear that for non Aviation industry people the information was far too technical and misleading – actual communities were not highlighted to the members, indeed some affected communities did not even have a representative on the PANMCC. How can this be deemed as “open and informed”.

(b) engages with industry and business stakeholders in an open, informed and reasonable way;

Unknown – no data available.

(c) has adequate triggers for public consultation under legislation and whether procedures used by Airservices Australia are compliant with these requirements;

It would not appear so to the “layman” – if there are triggers for public consultation there is no evidence that Airservices Australia have used these.

(d) is accountable, as a government-owned corporation, for the conduct of its noise management strategy;

It would appear not, no one has been able to get answers to questions. Noise management strategy would appear obsolete.

(e) has pursued and established equitable noise-sharing arrangements in meeting its responsibilities to provide air traffic services and to protect the environment from the effects associated with aircraft for which it is responsible;

There do not appear to be any noise sharing arrangements – the same communities are affected each time. Communities are being affected by both take off and landing noise – this goes against policy. There does not appear to have been meeting of responsibilities with regards the environment, conservation block is overflown in Glen Forrest and endangered species not seen anymore.

(f) requires a binding Community Consultation Charter to assist it in consulting fully and openly with communities affected by aircraft noise; and

This is most definitely required, there should be independent examiners looking at all issues before any changes are made. There should be binding Community Consultation Charter which allows home owners to examine proposals and see how changes will affect

them BEFORE they become a reality – be open and transparent.
(g) any other related matter.

End of Submission.

Attachment 1A – Email to Airservices Australia – response to which took over one month.

I am writing to join the many other residents in expressing my horror at the recent changes to air traffic over Glen Forrest, Western Australia .

In August 2003 we moved to a little known area at the back of Glen Forrest on the Darlington border, to an area designated as Rural Landscape Living, these blocks vary in size from 2 acres to upward of 20 acres, all with one thing in common - the amazing peace and tranquility of a real rural lifestyle. I still have the real estate details for the property that we moved to (and would be more than happy to provide a copy to any interest parties), the caption is "Listen to the Quiet" - followed by "have you ever dreamt of living in total tranquility and serenity amidst natural bushland". This has been true for the last six years we have never had any air traffic with the exception of the occasional water bomber and an occasional light recreational aircraft - in fact the noise of an aircraft usually has us running outside to find out what is happening.

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I look forward to receiving your response.

Regards,

Attachment 1B – Response from Airservices Australia.

Thank you for your emails dated 20 and 30 July 2009 to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP,

about changes to flight paths at Perth. The Minister has forwarded your emails to Airservices Australia for response.

I note that at the time of writing you had not received a reply from the Airservices' Noise Enquiry Unit to your enquiry of 24 June. I apologise for the delay in their reply which I understand was sent to you on 24 July. I further note your comment that the Shire of Mundaring had not been informed about the Western Australia Route Review Project

(WARRP) prior to the implementation of changes to Perth's air route structure. This is not the case as this Shire is represented on the Perth . Airport Noise Management Consultative Committee which Airservices kept informed about WARRP over an approximate 18-month period before these changes took effect.

With regard to your questions about the flight path over Glen Forrest, as noted in information previously sent to you by the Noise Enquiry Unit moving this flight path further to the east would interfere with departures from the southern end of the runways. There would also be a significant noise impact for residents closer to the airport, particularly in the Bickley area, as departing aircraft would need to be held at low level for a much longer period until the passed under the arrival track.

I must emphasise that airspace design is a highly complex matter which is made more difficult at Perth by the large amount of airspace under military control, and therefore unavailable or severely restricted for civilian operations, and the sustained high level of growth of the airport. In the design of the current structure, I can assure you we thoroughly examined all options for air routes including your suggestion.

I am advised by Airservices' Air Traffic Control that the Singapore Airlines aircraft you observed tracking over the south end of Mundaring Weir followed this route in order to avoid a severe weather cell. In such circumstances aircraft are able to vary their approach under the direction of Air Traffic Control to ensure safe operation. Our data shows the Qantas aircraft you identified overflew Glen Forrest at 5,916 feet above sea level; the majority of aircraft at this point are at or above 6,000 feet.

We are closely monitoring the new route structure for Perth from both operational and community impact perspectives.

Additional information about WARRP is available at our website at the following link [o:http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/projectsservices/projects/waroutereview/default.asp](http://www.airservicesaustralia.com/projectsservices/projects/waroutereview/default.asp);

Thank you again for your enquiry.

Yours sincerely

Paul Dawson

Acting General Manager

Corporate & International Affairs

~ August 2009

