

Personal Impact Lived Experience Statement for the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee hearing.

Inquiry into the impact and mitigation of aircraft noise, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

My question for inquiry, put to the senators; why is it up to a handful of locals to identify and highlight "glaring" shortcomings in what should be a professional organisation: lack of thorough investigation, not meeting own standards, rash illogical decisions that expose other communities to extreme noise disturbance in response to concerns raised by fewer people experiencing lesser impact. Complete disregard for welfare and sole focus on maximising tourism industry and corporate profits. In the Airport master plan lack of curfew is something to be exploited. Cost benefit analysis is extremely flawed with economic benefit blown out of proportion (multigenerational wealth gap highlights industry profits do not filter down to the average ratepayer) and costs frequently downplayed to 'minimal noise disturbance' and finally gaslighting communities by hiding behind lack of legislation. It is imperative to ensure this does not happen again and that communities affected by noise and pollution by business activities have enforceable mitigation policies.

I am very concerned with lack of contact identifying property owners that would be impacted by low flying aircraft: this was assessed as "impact not expected to be noticeable". Personal experience frequently instead is guaranteed waking (after dark) from late or early flights resulting in regular sleep disturbance; with one occasion in May 2022 when I was woken suddenly from deep sleep by a deafening roar and the room filled with lights from an aircraft. (Note. We are off grid so dark before and after as there is no ambient light from streets etc). With this sudden 'high alert' disturbance, I experienced palpitations and felt panic assuming the plane was going to crash into the bluff in very high winds. My pets were also awoken and ran and hid under the bed. After this incident, I moved away from the bluff immediately as I was aware my health could be impacted if I lived on the affected property. Following this event in 2022 I have been renting 1 km away and whilst still being able to hear aircraft noise, it is annoying rather

than disturbing. For comparison, at no time during my peacekeeping mission overseas was any event as regularly stressful as this experience back home! It has taken 2 years to sell the affected property and although AS now acknowledges considerable impact on the local Community that it previously overlooked and underestimated, there has been no attempt to compensate or support locals experiencing disruption in their lives as a direct result from the sudden decision to create a concentrated flight path in close proximity to the airport (low altitude traffic).

Carlton bluff has been owned by my family for 3 generations and selling my property has caused additional distress as this was supposed to be achieving my dream: coming back home and setting up a wellbeing retreat after serving 16 years in the military. This area has a strong connection for my sisters and my family. We spent hours each Summer playing with cousins and second cousins as the extended family visited our Grandparents: loving being out in the bush, exploring rockpools and being taught to identify native species by our mother. My sisters and I have all gone on to work in Allied Health or Environmental Landscape project design fields (from our early love of biology and botany). In addition, my Mother's ashes were scatted into the ocean from the bluff (Grandparents also buried here). Developing a sense of belonging to place and connection with the environment is important for Wellbeing and promoting sustainable lifestyles.

For additional context, I am neurodiverse and very sensitive to mechanical noise, particularly high and loud frequencies. The incessant noise from flights every 5minutes (prior to the NAP) means I cannot work in peace and quiet enough to concentrate, and when aircraft are directly overhead cannot even hold a conversation! The noise is the equivalent decibels as a hairdryer!! (Or loud thunderstorm). This is not once a day but frequent interruptions. Not only was there no warning, since implementation 7 years ago, there has been still no attempt to identify people impacted, this lack of responsibility is unacceptable as I personally made available the WHO report on impact of noise negatively affecting health including reducing life expectancy! Instead, mental health hotline numbers are now included at the end of emails!! This does not qualify as hazard reduction!! Furthermore, my partner has been diagnosed with PTSD as a result of his service in Afghanistan. I have worked with Trauma clients for over 10 years and intend to complete PhD research in Trauma Response Spectrum and comparison on neurobiological modulation via different treatments for Stress deduction. I am well aware of the impact of

cumulative stress. This needs to be acknowledged and basic human rights need to be protected: to live in safety. A home should be a place of safety, not a place of heightened distress caused by external business activities who profit at others expense. There is a human cost: my question is what is the value of human life? There is a growing body of research that shows prolonged exposure to Aircraft noise in proximity to airports decreases life expectancy and increases risk factors of co-morbidities and health problems. Who pays for the increased burden on the healthcare system, especially in rural areas that already have poor access to services?

Worse, exposure levels are expected to increase. I addressed this concern at the community meeting at Primrose RSL which the AS spokesperson informed us apparently "Air Services is not responsible for future forecasting". So.. a flight path was implemented during covid lockdowns without local community awareness let alone engagement, and subsequently there is no responsibility nor accountability for the ongoing impact since this decision was made! It has taken 2 years for my affected property on the bluff to sell: at \$300k less than advertised price.

I am also saddened at the utter lack of environmental impact assessment: there were eagles nesting on my family's property. I frequently filmed them soaring above the coastline hunting. One of the pair was lost in 2023, the second has disappeared a few months ago. Presumably bird-strike, as (White-bellied) sea eagles have been officially recorded breeding here on databases since the 70s.

Furthermore, the initial decision to move the flight path from Dunalley closer in to affect more local communities makes no logical sense, especially when Sorell council has stated they advocated for Dunalley residents 'wellbeing in 2017. This further adds insult to injury that for some reason the same standards to not apply to Forcett, Primrose Sands and Carlton residents.

Finally, misrepresentation of data to downplay noise levels and mislead the community by underreporting exposure using averaging techniques over wide areas, inaccurate modelling and confusing graphic information is appalling. E.g., 70 decibel 'zone' extending 1km. This seems to be deliberate because above 80 decibels is considered 'extremely loud' and potentially dangerous level of exposure (risk of hearing loss depending on frequency and

duration of exposure). Also averaging does not consider Law of attenuation: every 4m away from source = 6 decibel drop. Thus, very different impact for those directly under a flight path versus 1km away is the difference between annoying and disturbing. As a 5th generation descendant of a former Editor in Chief of the Mercury, abusing statistics (and not checking if data is accurate) in order to push hidden agendas is disgraceful journalism.

The accumulation effect of this situation shows complete disregard for local welfare and highlights industry incompetence or worse corruption. My father was one of the few people in Australia qualified to work on aircraft black boxes. Unethical behaviour and lack of corporate accountability the aviation industry is not new and had dramatic impact on my family's wellbeing 2 decades ago (Ansett collapse) and now again recently. Neither is the industry sustainable. It is a heavy polluter and can only operate profitably by unethical behaviour. Therefore, stricter regulation is needed and legislation updated to protect local communities from exploitation and ensure that a percentage of any profits or gains are returned to local communities via compensation. Fines also need to be imposed for breeches in standards. Side issue are helicopter pilots who regularly fly over our communities below legal limits with seeming immunity, and increasing drone use by 'tourists' and hobbyists. Gaps / shortfalls in legislation need to be fixed and people and businesses held accountable.

Thank you.

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References:

### Noise legislation and WHS

WHS Regulations 2022 – Tasmanian legislation (Work Health and Safety Act 2012)  
Chapter 3 General Risks and Workplace Management  
Section 34 – Duty to identify hazards  
Section 35 - Managing risks  
Section 36 - Hierarchy of control measures.  
Chapter 4 – 4.1 Noise (Industry equivalent noise exposure levels and fines).  
<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sr-2022-109>

### Aircraft noise and health impacts

Compendium of WHO and other UN guidance on health and environment, 2022 update:  
<https://www.who.int/tools/compendium-on-health-and-environment>

14<sup>th</sup> ICBen congress on Noise as a Public Health Problem (2023)  
<https://www.icben.org/2023/presenting35.pdf>

Airports, air pollution and contemporaneous health – Environmental health economic Analysis (2016)  
[https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/articles\\_journals/eheaNIEHS/ehea/resources/page143156](https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/articles_journals/eheaNIEHS/ehea/resources/page143156)

Review of health effects associated with exposure to jet engine emissions in and around airports (2021)  
<https://ehjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12940-020-00690-y>

For comparison Heathrow UK Economic costs of additional runway:  
<https://www.aef.org.uk/2016/04/01/mayor-of-london-report-expanding-heathrow-would-create-health-costs-up-to-25-billion/#:~:text=The%20health%2Drelated%20costs%20from,Heathrow%20is%20allowed%20to%20expand>

### Widening Inequality in wealth distribution in Australia (and worldwide)

Inequality in Australian (2023):  
[https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Inequality-in-Australia-2023\\_Overview\\_print.pdf](https://povertyandinequality.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Inequality-in-Australia-2023_Overview_print.pdf)

Intergenerational report ignores booming wealth and capital gains (2021):  
<https://australiainstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/P1107-IGR-ignores-wealth-and-capital-gains-WEB.pdf>

Government Environmental databases and information for planning activities PRIOR to implementation

Threatened species White bellied Sea eagle and Wedgetail eagle:

<https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/White-bellied-Sea-Eagle.aspx>

Threatened species within 5km of Primrose Sands:

<https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Results.aspx?locality=Primrose%20sands>