

SECLA Presentation 28/08/2024
(www.justplanerwrong.org)

We are based in a peaceful coastal and rural community, and the **effect of aircraft noise since 2017 on amenity, physical and mental wellbeing and the everyday life of residents** is very significant. Many people have moved to this region to escape the noise of city and suburban life and to enjoy their outdoor lifestyle. Currently the measure of impact of aircraft noise is in terms of an absolute value, 60dB, 70dB etc. and is based on an Australian Standard not designed for this purpose. The impact of noise should be measured with respect to a relative value, taking into account the ambient noise of an area. Aircraft noise in a busy area is far less impactful than in a quiet country location, many kilometres from the airport and never previously overflowed prior to 2017.

The current Airservices metric of community dissatisfaction, by measuring complaints to the Noise Complaints line, is not fit for purpose. Many people affected by noise are either unable to access this medium, find the engagement with Airservices too difficult and stressful, or have had a poor response to a complaint in the past and so do not bother to try again.

To be clear, we are not against aircraft travel. Aircraft bring tourists who benefit our area's economy. But this benefit is shared across the greater Southern region, whereas the aircraft noise 'sharing' arrangements as they stand, unfairly impact small communities. The lifestyle provided by moving to this area pre 2017 was an asset. This asset has since been degraded by external decisions so it is not unreasonable to expect some form of compensation for this loss.

The struggle, over seven years now, to regain quiet skies, through an acceptable solution, has been mentally draining, and has been a significant cost on people's time, with many withdrawing from active engagement, feeling powerless and emotionally bruised and some moving away from this area all together. Any trust in Airservices has been lost. We feel blindsided by the disingenuous 'community consultation' from Airservices, who say one thing and then deliver something else, and where each engagement was, it seemed, from a new tranche of Airservices staff who seemed completely unaware of the history of the flight path changes in the area. We feel threatened with further impacts in the near future with the release of 'Package 2' of Airservice's proposals that, on top of the current Noise Abatement Procedure trial, may bring even more noise to our communities.

Airservices implementation of new flight paths has left people emotionally scarred and caused deep community division, with some areas traditionally subject to air noise, having had it taken away and then later reapplied in a concentrated manner after a new community dynamic had been established.

Aircraft noise has negatively impacted small business in our area. Many tourists come to this region for its natural values, wildlife, clean air, pristine beaches and quiet escape from urban and suburban life. The area includes multiple award-winning hospitality destinations. Aircraft noise is not consistent with what many people value in a quiet tourism destination and has been the primary cause of at least one large development proposal being cancelled and multiple other developments being delayed, or put on hold due to uncertainty around aircraft noise impacts.

In terms of **proposals for mitigation and limitation of aircraft noise**, our area is currently subjected to a Noise Abatement Procedure trial where jet traffic is directed closer to our community for up to 18 hours a day, 2pm to 8am – a figure that was not part of the original NAP survey and our community was not consulted on. Faced with the potential for permanent implementation of this directive, and the spectre of expanded operations, including international flights, a curfew at Hobart Airport would be an appropriate mitigation strategy as implemented at other capital city airports.

Addressing the **barriers to the mitigation and limitation of aircraft noise**, we see the current governance of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman's Office, sitting within, and answerable to Airservices as inappropriate for an entity that should be fully independent of industry. We believe the ANO should be a parliamentary appointment.

Also, the current funding model for Airservices, which is heavily weighted by industry leaves questions around how much community concerns around aircraft noise are considered alongside airline industry priorities.

SECLA and its supporters thank you for the opportunity to speak at this Inquiry.