

Inquiry into Airservices Australia's Management of Aircraft Noise

The City of West Torrens appreciates the invitation to participate in the Australian Senate Inquiry into *"the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise under its responsibilities to provide air traffic services and protect the environment from the effects associated with the operation of aircraft for which it has legislative jurisdiction"*.

In undertaking its inquiry, it is noted that the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee will consider whether Airservices Australia:

"(a) has conducted an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy with communities affected by aircraft noise;
(b) engages with industry and business stakeholders in an open, informed and reasonable way;
(c) has adequate triggers for public consultation under legislation and whether procedures used by Airservices Australia are compliant with these requirements;
(d) is accountable, as a government-owned corporation, for the conduct of its noise management strategy;
(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;
(f) requires a binding Community Consultation Charter to assist it in consulting fully and openly with communities affected by aircraft noise; and
(g) any other related matter".

- Adelaide Airport, located wholly within the City of West Torrens, is the major gateway to the State of South Australia and services international, domestic and regional flights with a total passenger throughput of close to 7 million passengers per annum and 100,000 aircraft movements.
- The airport is located 6 kilometres due west of the Adelaide CBD and 2 kilometres from the shores of Gulf St Vincent. It is surrounded by residential, recreational and light industry developments.
- Aircraft noise management remains a critical concern to the community when it comes to airport operations. While Airservices Australia is responsible for the noise from aircraft while landing, taking off or taxiing, Council acknowledges that noise management is a shared responsibility amongst key stakeholders.
- The Australian Government through its National Aviation Policy – Flight Path to the Future White Paper released on 16 December 2009, recommends that airports take a more participative role in managing aircraft noise and the impacts on the community. Council agrees with this recommendation but it is recognised that airports cannot do this in isolation; a position which has also been recognised within the Policy Paper recommending the establishment by Airservices Australia of an Ombudsman to handle noise enquiries.
- Council recognises the efforts of the Federal Government under the Aircraft Noise Insulation Program that has resulted in 648 homes and 6 public buildings around Adelaide Airport in high noise areas being insulated. However Council is unaware what ongoing support or information is available to homeowners affected by aircraft noise.

- Council strongly supports the retention of the Adelaide Airport night-time curfew, being one mechanism to protect nearby residential properties from excessive aircraft noise.
- Council recognises and fully supports the work Airservices Australia is doing in developing new and improved flight path tracking and navigational technologies that enhance the efficiencies of aircraft in flight and which have the effect of minimising noise footprints, fuel burn and carbon emission. However, Council firmly believes that the consultative process to educate communities on the benefits of these new technologies could be improved by a partnership approach involving Airservices Australia, the airlines, all levels of Governments (Federal, State and Local) and airport operators.
- Council requests that Airservices Australia continues to assess and monitor the validity of the existing Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) System recognising that it was established approximately 30 years ago. Notwithstanding the longevity of the system, it is not well understood by the community. For example, the ANEF contours have no direct relevance to noise levels (decibels) but instead are the average daily noise exposure taking account of anticipated volume and pattern of aircraft movements around airports.
- The impacts of aircraft noise can be better controlled within a Greenfield situation. Within an existing site, such as Adelaide Airport, greater emphasis should be placed on operational changes. Such controls should be particularly emphasised along the airport boundary where interface with residential property is high.
- Access to accurate and timely information about projected and actual noise levels is valuable to Council when making land use planning decisions and developing policy. Improvements could be made in relation to the accessibility and timeliness of this data. Any new policy resulting from this data must be developed in association with State and Local Governments, as resulting policy will be administered by councils through their development assessment processes.
- Council's major liaison with Adelaide Airport is via the executive of Adelaide Airport Limited. By comparison, Council has limited direct communications with Airservices Australia. However it is assumed that, as Airservices Australia has a direct responsibility for many aspects of aviation-related operations at the airport, Adelaide Airport Limited are in many instances representing the views of Airservices Australia. As such, Council stresses the importance of maintaining a positive and proactive relationship with Adelaide Airport Limited.

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