

SUBMISSION

FROM: HELEN SHARPE

TO: Senate Standing Committee's Inquiry into the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's management of aircraft noise.

Summary

The terms of reference for this Inquiry focus on the adequacy of the consultation processes on aircraft noise. Consultation processes are clearly not adequate but consultation without a commitment to action on the results of the consultation process runs the risk of being seen by long suffering residents as a public relations exercise.

Response to Terms of Reference

a) Has Airservices Australia conducted an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy with communities affected by aircraft noise.

To my knowledge, having lived in Cheltenham for five years, there has been no public consultation on aircraft noise. I have noticed a massive increase in the number and noise level of aircraft over my area and feel there is no interest in addressing this from any level of government.

The distress I feel at the level and frequency of aircraft noise is extreme. I used to enjoy time at home, reading, listening to music, gardening etc. I also work part time from home. At times I have to leave my house due to the unrelenting nature of the aircraft noise. This is not acceptable.

b) Does Airservices Australia engage with industry and business stakeholders in an open, informed and reasonable way.

As I am not in business or industry I have no knowledge of this. **However**, it would seem that industry and business needs are well catered for as opposed to ordinary residents. Pilot training schools and the Moorabbin Airport Corporation seem to be subject to no limits on the number of flights, flight paths or types of planes used (which are extremely noisy older small planes). This is all driven by commercial interests. As Airservices Australia is mostly funded by the industry I would assume it is very consultative with that industry.

c) Does Airservices Australia have adequate triggers for public consultation under legislation, and are procedures used by Airservices Australia compliant with these requirements.

As in my response to **a)** there has been no consultation on aircraft noise that I am aware of. Could I add that consultation without action is a waste of time. Even if consultation had taken place residents want **action** to address their concerns about aircraft noise.

d) Is Airservices Australia accountable as a government owned corporation for the conduct of its noise management strategy.

The answer to this is **NO** if they are responsible for managing aircraft noise, as this has increased at least fourfold in the five years I have lived here. I am north west of the airport, near Cheltenham Railway station and when I moved here there were 5 or 6 flights per day which, while noisy, were infrequent enough to live with. Now there are about 30 flights per day, sometimes at 5 minute intervals. So the amenity of a pleasant, peaceful suburb has been greatly decreased as a result of Airservices Australia's 'management' of aircraft noise.

e) Has Airservices Australia 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.

Aircraft noise is currently being shared by all suburbs around Moorabbin Airport. However I assume this is not what the Inquiry means by 'equitable noise sharing'. It is clear that it is untenable for the "third busiest airport in Australia" (quote from Moorabbin Airport website) to be located in densely populated suburbs. It should be noted that pilot training schools are not allowed at Essendon Airport. I can't see why the same policy is not applicable to Moorabbin Airport. Are Cheltenham, Mentone, Parkdale, Dingley and Heatherton residents less worthy of consideration than those living in Essendon? Pilot training schools should be dispersed to several regional airports for both safety and noise reasons. This would be equitable noise sharing and would also address safety concerns. Premier John Brumby promised to move pilot training schools to regional areas when there was a fatal crash by a trainee pilot in Cheltenham but that was over a year ago and nothing has happened.

f) Does Airservices Australia require a binding Community Consultation Charter to assist in consulting fully and openly with communities affected by aircraft noise.

A **binding** Community Consultation Charter would be a good start **BUT** without a genuine **binding commitment** to reduce aircraft noise it will become just another public relations exercise allowing the government and Airservices Australia to be seen to be taking action while the aircraft noise goes on. I would like to see **binding guidelines** on an acceptable number of flights per day, acceptable noise levels of aircraft and frequency of flights, designed to suit residents **not** Moorabbin Airport Corporation and commercial pilot training schools.