

Opening Statement

Carlton River, Primrose Sands and Forcett Flight Path Opponents Group

28 August 2024

Dear Senators,

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the impact of the Runway 30 RNP-AR flight path on our community. In a move that defies logic, Airservices Australia routed a flight path less than 2,500 feet above our homes in 2019, leading to a staggering 100-fold increase in aircraft noise. This action disregarded residents' well-being and directly violated their publicly stated commitments to managing aircraft noise (refer to Exhibit A – Statistics from "Aircraft in Your Neighbourhood").

They acknowledged they underestimated the noise impact of this flight path in their post-implementation review (refer to Exhibit B). Despite this admission, Airservices Australia has hesitated to implement any meaningful changes, perhaps to avoid further embarrassment after making a hash of the original flight path over Dunalley. As a result, our community continues to suffer from aircraft noise levels frequently exceeding 75 decibels – far above the World Health Organisation's recommended limits (see Exhibit C – Plot of Airservices Noise Monitor Data, and D – World Health Organisation Communique).

Our community survey, conducted earlier this year, highlighted the extensive impacts of this aircraft noise. Many respondents reported mental distress directly linked to intrusive aircraft noise. This noise impacts daily routines and peaceful activities, such as spending time outdoors and chatting with neighbours. It poses particular challenges for working from home in professions requiring quiet settings. Respondents reported shutting themselves inside their homes to escape the noise. Others

22 expressed concern about the impact of aircraft noise on property values.

23 Rather than addressing noise issues, Airservices Australia employs stalling tactics to wear us down,
24 avoiding accountability by limiting the scope of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman. Briefings to politi-
25 cians often portray the agency in a heroic light, dismissing dissenting voices as a minority. They
26 control the narrative through orchestrated community engagement sessions, formulaic responses to
27 noise complaints, and selective information fed to the media. Exhibit E is a shameful example of
28 this. Let's be clear – as Exhibit F shows:

- 29 • Our Facebook group has over 165 engaged members.
- 30 • We received over 150 responses to our community survey, many from people not affiliated with
31 our group.
- 32 • We gathered over 650 signatures on an online petition advocating for a flight path change.

33 Our noise-impacted community may be small, but that does not mean we can be considered accept-
34 able collateral damage. Respondents to our survey strongly indicated a preference for relocating the
35 flight path or implementing a flight curfew. Airservices Australia never acknowledged receiving our
36 survey results, which is yet another example of their dismissive and highhanded behaviour.

37 A noise abatement procedure is a band-aid fix, with expected increases in airport movements likely
38 to negate any temporary relief (See Exhibit G - Section 5 of the Hobart Airport Master Plan 2022).
39 The current noise abatement trial has exacerbated issues in Forcett, where flight paths converging
40 on a waypoint cause residents significant distress. They must contend with low-flying aircraft on
41 the RNAV track not adhering to precise routes.

42 The stark reality is that the Airservices Act 1995 does not require Airservices Australia to prioritise
43 community well-being. This legislative gap allows them to act with impunity, sidelining health and
44 environmental concerns in favour of operational efficiency and the economic interests of the aviation
45 industry. The Aviation White Paper underscores this critical oversight.

46 We urgently call for:

- 47 • Moving the flight path east so it passes over water or a less inhabited region at a higher
48 altitude. This includes shifting the waypoint with aircraft converging over Forcett, reducing
49 the impact on our community.
- 50 • Thoroughly revising the Airservices Act to ensure that community impact is given equal pri-
51 ority to flight safety, a crucial aspect not sufficiently addressed in the Aviation White Paper.
- 52 • Establishing stringent noise regulations to limit community exposure to aircraft noise, particu-
53 larly as emerging technologies like air taxis and drone delivery systems increase air traffic. This
54 aligns with the Aviation White Paper's commitment to improving transparency and enhancing
55 community engagement in noise impact management.
- 56 • Mandating Airservices Australia adopt best practice consultation when altering airspace and
57 flight paths. As the Aviation White Paper endorsed, clear, transparent communication must
58 ensure that community interests are genuinely considered, with mechanisms for shared decision-
59 making and accountability.
- 60 • Transforming the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman and Noise Complaints Information Service into
61 a robust, independent agency. This aligns with the White Paper's plan to reform the Aircraft
62 Noise Ombudsman, ensuring it can effectively hold Airservices Australia accountable.

63 Senators, the evidence is clear, and action is urgent. We trust this inquiry will lead to reforms,
64 some already outlined in the Aviation White Paper, that hold Airservices Australia accountable and
65 protect our communities. We are disappointed that the White Paper specifies no new curfews at
66 Australian airports, favouring the aviation industry. We cannot allow this sector to profit at our
67 expense. Your support is crucial for safeguarding our health, well-being, and environment.

68 Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.