



# THE ROYAL FEDERATION OF AERO CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA

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Submission to inquiry into

## The Planning, Construction and Management of the Western Sydney Airport Project

1. The Royal Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia is the national body of aero clubs, flight schools and other aviation organisations and associations. The prime objectives of the Federation are to foster aviation in Australia, to ensure adequate flying training is available to all pilots and to encourage national and local competitions, air races and other aviation events. We provide representation at all levels of government and industry on flying training through submission of responses to enquiries and proposed change on matters that directly affect general aviation and actively participate in working groups and forums.
2. Our main area of concern relates to the minimal consultation and dissemination of information around the integration of the proposed airport and airspace with the established general aviation industry in the Sydney Basin.
3. The Federation has contributed to the work of a number of bodies associated with airspace including the Australian Strategic Air Traffic Management Group (ASTRA). This group was briefed by an officer of the WSA Co Limited several years ago who indicated awareness of matters relating to:
  - the size and shape limitations of the (purchased) airport site and the resultant impact on runway configuration, which was intended to parallel those at Sydney airport; and
  - the impact on operations at both Camden and Bankstown airports through the elimination of their respective training areas and the restricted access to both these airports by general aviation aircraft.

Both the above items were recorded in the minutes of these meetings.

The WSA Co Limited representatives were advised that the WSA proposals would adversely affect general aviation businesses and the value of their aircraft assets. New investment in the sector would dry up and associated support business would disappear.

4. Additionally, the Bureau of Meteorology have indicated at regional meetings that the area around the proposed WSA was especially susceptible to wind shear, a hazard for airline sized aircraft.
5. Of great importance to general aviation, because it affects access by operators and customers, is the proposed structure of airspace in the Sydney Basin to accommodate flights into and out of WSA. The general aviation cohort has been advised that there will be no information on this key element of the project eighteen months before the airport becomes operational. It is unacceptable that information that will directly affect the viability of an aviation business should be withheld.

Aviation business, like any other, must be able to reasonably project their business development beyond eighteen months. Withholding proposed airspace configuration creates a high level of uncertainty and undermines normal business development opportunities.

Airspace belongs to all Australians and should be shared fairly and reasonably. The investors in airlines should not derive an unequal financial benefit from airspace usage compared to the investors in general aviation flight training, general charter and aerial work operations, maintenance organisations and support service providers.

Sharing traffic-dense airspace in safety and harmony is practised daily in the United States. Australia has the technology and personnel skills to introduce procedures that will allow all users access to airspace in and around major airports in a safe, practical manner recognising that for small non-commercial aircraft there may be limitations at peak operational times.

6. The general aviation sector enjoys good working relationships with service providers such as Airservices Australia, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and Bureau of Meteorology. There are many forums where discussions can take place.

We ask that:

- regular, open and honest communication on the above matters be initiated through appropriate channels: public meetings, specialist working groups and technical forums;
- all involved parties, including the project managers, government departments and service providers, be available for discussion and to answer questions;
- current, relevant information be promulgated to all general aviation stakeholders affected by this project to allow them to consider their options and understand the long term impact on their businesses.

The Federation thanks the Finance and Public Administration Committee's invitation to contribute to its inquiry.

Kerry Nolan  
President

19 February 2021