

28 January, 2010

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra 2600  
ACT

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission to Senate Inquiry into Aircraft Noise in Perth

I am complaining about excessive aircraft noise in the Chidlow-Gidgegannup area of Perth, Western Australia, and the management of this issue by Airservices Australia (ASA).

It is beyond a joke that I am being woken at any hour of the night by the whining and squealing of aircraft. Some nights it is so bad that I can be just nodding off after being awoken by aircraft noise, only to be re-wakened again and again and again. And as for getting a sleep-in on the weekend – you have to be joking! The Perth hills was a peaceful, rural area until the ASA sprung this on us.

I used to live in Stoneville and noticed the increase in air traffic there in late 2008. I thought that by moving further out of town to Chidlow that the noise couldn't possibly get worse, as surely the aircraft are higher up, etc. But for some reason the noise is worse and the fact that it can occur at any time of the day or night is particularly unfair.

Perth is now the capital of the state which is the backbone of the economy of the whole of Australia, it has the lowest unemployment rate and the highest house prices overall – we are leaders and yet we kowtow to the other states and won't impose a curfew on aircraft arrivals and departures. A curfew seems to be the most obvious solution. We even have oodles of sea room to the west, where early arrivals (pre-6a.m.) could be stacked. The pursuit of dollars should not be put above everything else in life.

I hereby address the following matters which have been referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee regarding the actions of ASA:

**Item 1** – How effective has ASA been in managing aircraft noise under its responsibilities to

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provide air traffic services and protect the environment from the effects associated with the operation of aircraft for which it has legislative jurisdiction?

I consider that ASA has shown a complete inability to effectively manage aircraft noise, to the extent that the problem has been viewed as trivial compared to their apparent desire to achieve maximum revenue, i.e. to get as many planes in and out of Perth Airport as possible. Will we ever again be able to get undisturbed rest for even a few hours?

No one disputes that ASA should be endeavouring to provide all air services with safety to the fore, but it is ridiculous to suggest that to change flight paths and frequency in order to improve the amenity of those on the ground will compromise this.

ASA is responsible for protecting the environment from the effects associated with the operation of aircraft. Since the environment is suffering from these at any time of the day and night, then it is ASA's responsibility to deal with the problem. They should not try to "pass the buck" by claiming that the problem is due to the scheduling of flights and is therefore the responsibility of the airport and airlines.

Note that in determining the level of noise nuisance, ASA must realise that they cannot just measure noise in terms of decibels with their Noise Monitoring Terminals. For example, would you get more of a fright if someone crept up behind you and shouted "boo" when you are in a disco, or when you are sitting quietly in your garden listening to the birds and the wind in the trees? Humans are disturbed by noise above the ambient level, and therefore it is the nuisance level above local ambient levels which is significant.

**Item 2a – Has ASA conducted an effective, open and informed public consultation strategy with those communities affected by aircraft noise?**

A proper consultation process has not been followed, since the majority of the community only found out about the increase in air traffic once it had already started and not because they had been made aware in advance. I know of no one who complained during the alleged consultation phase, but certainly know of plenty of people who are complaining now.

**Item 2d – Is ASA accountable, as a government-owned corporation, for the conduct of its noise management strategy?**

I wasn't told about this up front and now that it's happened seem powerless to change it. Where is the accountability in that?

Furthermore, it is unacceptable that ASA has unprecedented power to instigate changes such as those to the Perth Airport flight paths in late 2008, with no system of checks or balances.

It appears that the time has arrived for a public, formal, national noise management strategy to be imposed on ASA, along with the establishment of an independent and publically accountable, monitoring and governing organisation.

**Item 2e – Has ASA 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?**

The community is well aware that there must be aircraft flying into and out of Perth Airport - this activity contributes to making Western Australia the great economic force that is in Australia. Why, though, should we get a disproportionate number of flights over our suburb – what is equitable in that? And why should we endure this through the night time as well, to the detriment of our health and wellbeing?

What ASA and others must realise is that it is perfectly feasible to have a safe, busy, revenue-raising airport, as well as a contented community. This is most easily achieved by instigating a night time curfew, as has been done at other major centres in Australia and overseas. The community is, after all is said and done, the customer and the customer needs his/her sleep!

I trust that the Committee will realise there is an unresolved issue with the management of aircraft noise by ASA and will work to put it right.

Yours sincerely,  
Sue McNaughtan