

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2010
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: AA 01

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Acceptable Aircraft Noise Levels Over Inhabited Areas

Hansard Page/s: 134 (09/02/10)

Senator Back asked:

Senator BACK—Thank you very much. I have a question that refers to a couple of different dates: the first, just the other day, 2 February, in which residents in the Perth hills area of Stoneville noted planes flying overhead at two- to three-minute intervals between 7 am and 7 pm, with some being so loud that it was not possible for the person describing this to hear their television; and one example of a day of flight activity that is now typical in the area, residents describing it as psychological torture. Other residents in the same area have described that on some nights they do not get woken at all; on an average night they are woken half a dozen times. Does Airservices Australia have some type of gauge of what is or is not acceptable aircraft activity over inhabited areas?

Mr Russell—The noise decibel readings that we would regard as being acceptable are in the order of 60 decibels. I am not sure of the specifics of the incident that you refer to, but I am more than happy to take that issue on notice and we will provide an answer to you.

Answer:

Airservices Australia has advised there were 270 total flights for the airport between the hours of 7am and 7pm on 2 February 2010, 133 of which overflew Stoneville in accordance with established procedures (131 arrivals and 2 departures).

There is an increased number of aircraft using this arrival route at present due to the temporary closure of Runway 03/21 at Perth Airport for resurfacing. This work which commenced on 1 February 2010 is scheduled to be completed in early April 2010.

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Question No.: AA 02

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Western Australia Route Review Project Consultation

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

1. Going forward, what specific model of community consultation does Airservices Australia propose to undertake?
 - (a) In what circumstances will consultation occur?
 - (b) Who will be consulted?
 - (c) Will this information be of a technical or practical nature?
 - (d) Will there be direct community consultation?
 - (e) If there is community consultation:
 - in what manner will this be conducted;
 - what will be the model of advertising this consultation;
 - how will you determine which localities should be included in the consultation; and
 - will the community consultation include a process for community feedback to reported back to Airservices Australia for planning?
2. What are the different process/models of consultation used around Australia?
3. During the meeting hosted by the Shire of Mundaring, it was said that Airservices Australia frequently attends public meetings
 - (a) Are public meetings a standard process for community consultation at any airports in Australia?
 - (b) Are there other forms of direct community consultation used at any airports in Australia?
 - (c) Are there differences in constitution and terms of references between PANMCC (Perth Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee) and other similar bodies across Australia?
 - (d) Does Airservices Australia foresee any reason why a consistent community consultation cannot be mandatory across Australia for different levels of airport? For example, is it possible that all major airports, or all airports with a specified traffic capacity have the same community consultation process?
 - (e) If this is not possible please explain why different community consultation processes would be appropriate in different circumstances.
4. Now you have undertaken a public forum in the Hills, will you organise public forums in other communities, as has been requested by the Member for Swan?

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Answer:

- 1-2. Airservices Australia has recently developed a tailored consultative process to be applied when introducing new technologies or procedures. Where flight path change proposals are not primarily safety related, there is often greater opportunity to involve communities during the design of proposals. This may be where various operational, environmental (reduction in aircraft emissions) and efficiency drivers are also being pursued and in these cases, Airservices tailors its consultation accordingly. This approach identifies the level of consultation required with the community beyond the airport noise community committees, the need to personally brief community stakeholders, the effectiveness of Airservices' targeted information mediums and the strength and nature of comments on a proposed change with aircraft noise implications for the local airport community.
3. In Australia, airport community consultation forums are conducted by respective airports and not by Airservices Australia. Where applicable, Airservices attends these forums as either a member or on an invitation basis. The Government's Aviation White Paper announced that all airports subject to the planning framework in the *Airports Act 1996* will be required to establish and lead Community Aviation Consultative Groups. These Groups will address planning and development issues and a range of other operational matters, such as aircraft noise.
4. Airservices Australia is not aware of any such request made directly by the Member for Swan.

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Question No.: AA 03

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Western Australia Route Review Project Flight Paths

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

1. Notwithstanding the complexity of the Perth airspace, in the initial phase of the WARRP, were there any other routes considered?
 - a. If at any time during WARRP, alternative flight paths were considered:
 - can you provide a diagrammatic example of these paths;
 - what were the specific reasons that each of the potential paths were not pursued further; and
 - was the range of potential flight paths made known to any airline prior to a final determination of flight paths being made?
 - b. What is the reason (by reference to diagrams if necessary) that the flight paths could not be located more extensively over national and state parks in the Darling Range locality.
2. What consultation takes place between Airservices Australia and any airline during route reviews?
 - a. It is entirely reasonable there be some level of consultation between airlines, airports and Airservices Australia. In the process of a route review, what is the relative degree of importance given to feedback received from airlines, compared to all other considerations?
 - b. What is the level of disclosure during consultations with any airlines, what information is shared and what information do they have access to.
 - c. What was the nature the consultation between Airservices Australia and any airlines during the WARRP.
3. Was the WARRP instigated in response to the CASA audit report from 2002 or 2003?
 - a. If the relevant CASA Audit Report was number 03-01, please provide a reference point to the relevant safety concerns that led to the WARRP being undertaken, as these concerns are not apparent from the information provided under the FOI request.
 - b. If the relevant CASA Audit Report was **not** number 03-01, why was this report provided in response to the FOI request?

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Answer:

1. a. The substantive air route structures considered are at Attachment A. Option 3A was selected as being the most suitable and the SID / STAR structure designed to support this option is at Attachment B. Subsequent simulation trials refined the SID / STAR design. WARRP was discussed with airspace users at Perth as required. This information was provided to Perth Airport Aircraft Noise Management Consultative Committee members during the project period and published on Airservices' website.
1. b. The SID / STAR structure utilises these areas as much as is practicable, however the operational capabilities of aircraft and potential noise impacts to residents are limiting factors.
2. Airservices' consultation with industry during WARRP was technical in nature and conducted as required. At all times, safety was the primary consideration.
3. The relevant CASA Audit report is number 03-01 which is dated 8 July 2003. The relevant reference is RCA 0301-02 which is discussed on pages 4 and 6 of the report.

AA03 – Attachments A, B and C

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Question No.: AA 04

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Western Australia Route Review Project Environment Referral

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

I understand that matters relating to aircraft noise to be referred to the Minister for the Environment under section 160 of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

This states that before a Commonwealth agency authorises *'the adoption or implementation of a plan for aviation airspace management involving aircraft operations that have, will have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment'*, the plan must generally be referred to the Environment Minister for advice.

Steve Irons, the Member for Swan has written to the Minister and has been advised that no referral was made in the case of the Western Australian Route Review Project.

- Why did Airservices Australia not refer this matter?
- Under what circumstances would this be triggered?
- How significant do changes to flight paths have to be to warrant consultation by Airservices Australia?
- Can you explain how this differs from the referral of the Brisbane Parallel Runway proposal in 2005 for consideration under the EPBC Act?

Answer:

Proposals relating to the Western Australia Route Review Project were not referred to the Environment Minister as they were not determined to be 'significant' under the terms of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

When evaluating proposals for changes to flight paths, Airservices Australia uses threshold criteria, a copy of which can be found on Airservices' website.

The Brisbane parallel runway project was considered to be significant under the terms of the Act.

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Question No.: AA 05

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Western Australia Route Review Project Guidelines

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

1. What action is taken by Airservices Australia upon receiving a specific complaint through the Noise Enquiry Unit detailing the height, time, direction, noise and airline or other information that can identify an aircraft flying outside the Airservices Australia guidelines?
2. Are there any repercussions for airlines whose aircraft fly in contravention on the WARRP guidelines?

Answer:

There are no WARRP 'guidelines'. Complaints made to the Airservices Australia Noise Enquiry Unit are followed up in accordance with their nature and priority, for example safety issues are referred to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. Airservices has also taken the option to advise the aircraft operator and/or owner where reported practices are of concern to the community.

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Question No.: AA 06

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Perth Flight Frequency

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

1. Does Airservices Australia have any control over the frequency of flights?
2. When aircraft are flying in the Perth Control area, they are generally limited to a max speed of 250 knots. At this speed, a 15 nautical mile separation equates to 3.5 minutes.
3. Does the lateral separation minima dictate to the airlines what the maximum frequency of flights is, as residents in the Darling Range locality have frequently reported that planes often fly overhead in intervals of 3.5 minutes?

Answer:

1. No.
2. Various speed limitations apply to aircraft operating below 10,000 feet within the Perth Terminal Area and are expressed in terms of Indicated Air Speed. 15 nautical mile separation is not a standard used by Airservices Australia in terminal areas.
3. No.

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Question No.: AA 07

Division/Agency: Airservices Australia

Topic: Flight Paths at Perth

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Back asked:

Under the new flight paths for Perth Airport is there any circumstance in which jet and non-jet aircraft may share the flight track albeit with some vertical separation?

Answer:

Yes. Whilst the Western Australia Route Review Project generally established separate flight paths for jet and non-jet traffic, where the departure or arrival of an aircraft is in close proximity to the aerodrome, common flight paths are used due to the critical requirement for these aircraft to be aligned with the duty runway. In addition, four flight paths remain common due to their low frequency of traffic and military airspace restrictions.