

# Jon Stanhope MLA

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### TRALEE A POOR PLANNING OUTCOME FOR REGION

The decision to allow the release of residential sites at Tralee and Environa was a mistake and the ACT Government would continue to oppose any attempt to have Canberra suburbs bear the burden of greater aircraft noise as a consequence of such poor planning decisions, Chief Minister Jon Stanhope said today.

Mr Stanhope said the only concession to common sense in today's announcement by NSW Planning Minister Frank Sartor was that the strategic detail of the developments would be negotiated with the ACT, in the context of the finalisation of a settlement strategy for the cross-border region.

That strategy is designed to prevent untrammelled development that could threaten regional water supplies and impose an unsustainable infrastructure burden on the ACT, and the negotiation would reveal whether NSW took its responsibility to be a good neighbour seriously, or was just going through the motions.

"Today's announcement is particularly disappointing given that Mr Sartor's own independent Inquiry into residential development in the Queanbeyan area last year concluded that residential development should only proceed in the area of Googong," Mr Stanhope said. "That inquiry found, among other things, that Tralee and Environa were unsuitable for residential development, given that they were under a flight path.

"Building homes at these locations will do three things: it will undermine the Canberra International Airport's attempt to divert air traffic away from Jerrabomberra; it will lead, over time, to calls for Canberra residents to share the burden of aircraft noise; and, again over time, it will create pressure for there to be a curfew on the airport's operations, thereby affecting its capacity to operate as a economic driver for the regional economy. In addition, locating homes right next to Hume – the ACT's second largest industrial estate – needlessly creates the prospect that NSW will one day try to restrict particular kinds of industrial development, as being incompatible with residential development.

"I am also bemused by the decision by the Jerrabomberra Residents Association to support residential development in the airport noise corridor, apparently in exchange for a new school and aquatic centre. The result, within a very short period, will be more aircraft noise for the people of Jerrabomberra. I fear this is a deal the residents of Jerrabomberra will quickly come to rue."

Mr Stanhope said he understood Mr Sartor's argument that Queanbeyan's development should not be limited to one development front or one developer and accepted the principle that Queanbeyan should continue to have the percentage of the regional residential market that it currently had — about 10%.

But he said there was a need for caution over what level of growth would be sustainable.

"Mr Sartor believes 10% of the market will translate into around 10,000 new dwellings over 25 years — 9000 of which would be in the greenfields of Googong, Tralee and Environa," Mr Stanhope said.

"This is likely to put us above the upper limit of high-end projections for population growth. To sustain such growth we will need to have solved out current concerns in relation to regional water security. We need to give recognition to the potential limiting impact that a long-term drought may have, over the period we are talking about.

"In the context of more moderate growth outcomes for the region, Mr Sartor's plans to defer development of northern Tralee and Environa make good sense - particularly as these are also the areas most vulnerable to noise impacts."

Mr Stanhope said that with longer-term environmental considerations in mind, the the ACT would work cooperatively with NSW and the Queanbeyan City Council to achieve a detailed plan that would deliver the most sustainable development pattern and sequence for the cross-border area, in accordance with the principles outlined in the cross-border water and settlement memoranda of understanding signed by the ACT and NSW Governments in March 2006. The Commonwealth is also a signatory to the water MOU, in recognition of its legal obligation to secure water for the national capital.

The MOUs establish principles for sustainable development in the region and are designed to avoid overextending the ACT's water supply. Operationally, the MoUs require the finalisation of a settlement strategy agreed to by NSW and the ACT on where and when new settlements should occur. That strategy is due to be finalised by August this year.

Mr Stanhope said that of the areas around Queanbeyan that had been earmarked for possible future residential development, a development at Googong made the most sense, in the context of the MOUs. The ACT Government had embraced the NSW independent inquiry's recommendations on Googong as a practical compromise that recognised Queanbeyan's right to grow.

It was unfortunate that competing interests at play across the border had apparently resulted in a rejection of the NSW Government's own independent advice.

Statement Ends