

4. Integration with local planning strategies

This chapter of the Master Plan provides an overview of how Canberra Airport integrates with the planning strategies of the region.

Canberra Airport works in close consultation with the ACT Government to ensure that the Airport plays a positive role in the overall growth and development of the ACT.

The ACT Government's Economic White Paper and Canberra Spatial Plan are two excellent examples of the Airport's successful integration with local planning strategies. Similarly, the co-operation between the Airport, ACT and Commonwealth Governments to upgrade the roads through the Majura Valley has been very successful and productive.

The Economic White Paper acknowledges the Airport's role as a major employment generator capable of achieving sustainable growth and development. It also recognises that the Airport has set new benchmarks for commercial investment in the ACT.

The Canberra Spatial Plan sets out the ACT Government's strategic plan for the next 30 years and beyond. It too recognises the critically important role the Airport plays in bringing new industries and new jobs to Canberra and denotes the Airport as an Activity Node.

Similarly, the Airport has engaged with the National Capital Authority to actively integrate with the Authority's vision for the Capital, and the Airport has been denoted in the National Capital Plan as a Designated Office Employment Centre.

Canberra Airport also maintains a regular dialogue with the Queanbeyan City, Yass Valley and Palerang Shire Councils and the NSW Government.

Canberra Airport will continue to take an active role in all local planning strategies.

4. Integration with local planning strategies

Canberra Airport plays a pivotal role in the current and future success of Canberra and the region as a major social, tourism, business, government and trade gateway. Canberra Airport therefore recognises the importance of managing on-Airport development in unison with metropolitan and sub-regional planning strategies, and seeking, where possible, to have Canberra Airport recognised in these strategies as a critical economic and business gateway for the region that should be protected from inappropriate land-uses in the vicinity of the Airport.

This is confirmed by the December 2008 Aviation Green Paper which noted:

The Commonwealth will “work through the Council of Australian Governments and other appropriate forums to ensure a national land-use planning regime is put in place near airports and under flight paths to avoid noise-sensitive developments being located in these areas and to protect communities from excessive levels of aircraft noise.”

Commonwealth Government Aviation Green Paper, December 2008.

4.1 National Capital Authority

Following an amendment to the *Airports Act* in 2007 to bring Canberra Airport into line with all other privatised Airports, the National Capital Plan no longer applies at Canberra Airport.

The National Capital Authority have agreed that an amendment to the National Capital Plan (NCP), although “cosmetic to ensure consistency with the *Airports Act*” would “correctly reference the Master Plan for the Airport and acknowledge that the relevant planning authority is the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.” The amendment to the NCP is expected within the next 12-18 months.

Whilst no longer applicable, the National Capital Plan currently identifies Canberra Airport as part of the Central National Area, as a Defined Office Employment Centre and on the East-West Transport Corridor, as shown in Figure 4.1. The National Capital Plan states under the heading *Policies for the Location of Office Employment* that:

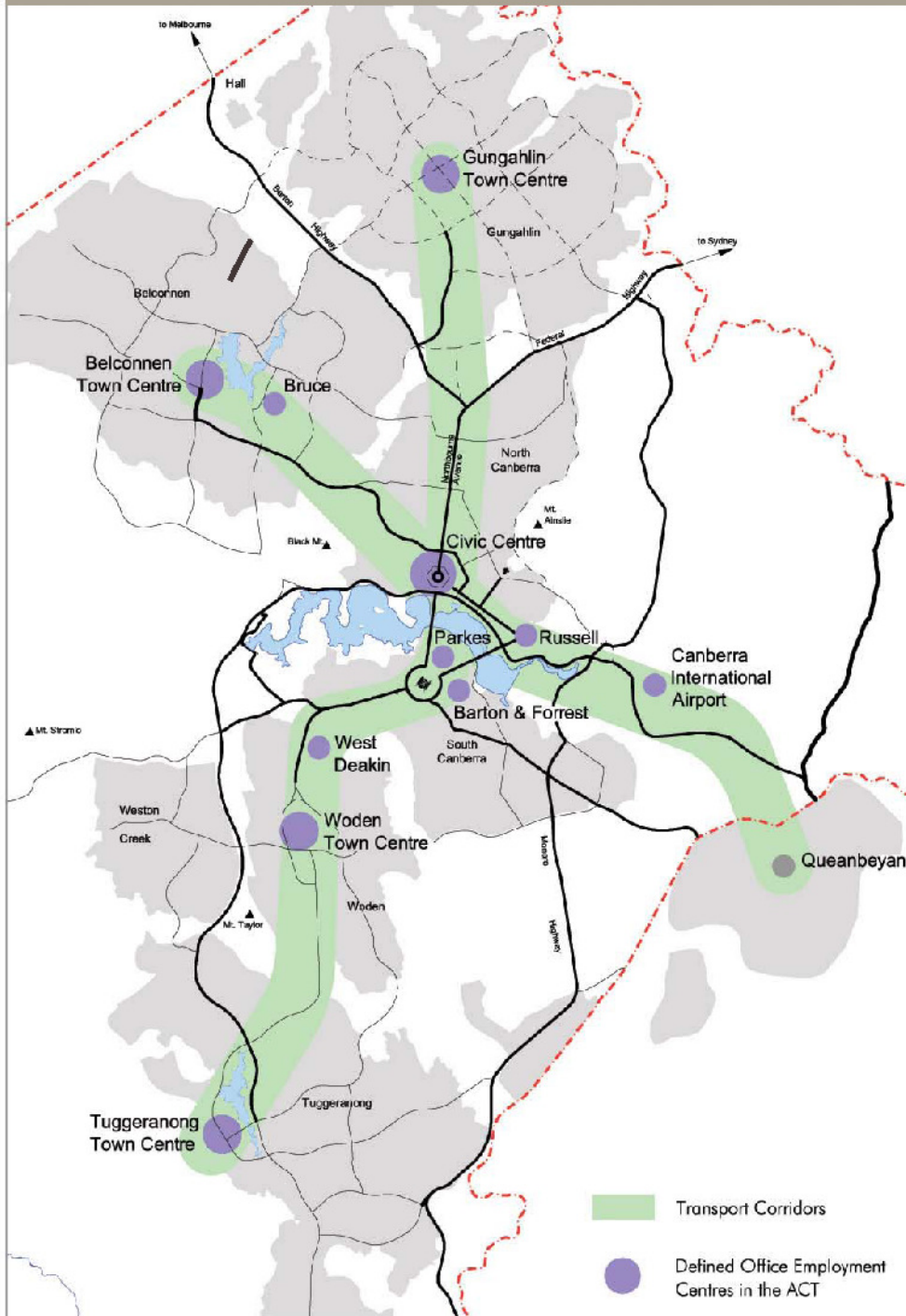
- “Major office employment should be located within Defined Office Employment Centres located within the two transport corridors.”; and
- “Defined Office Employment Centres within the East-West Corridor comprise Belconnen Town Centre, Bruce, Civic Centre, Russell and Canberra International Airport.”

Furthermore, broadacre areas surround Canberra Airport, which are recognised under the National Capital Plan as becoming of “considerable economic importance to Canberra over time, and which offer a basis for the future economic development of the city.”

While not strictly required, the developments proposed in this Master Plan are consistent with the National Capital Plan – the primary planning document for the ACT. It is noted that the Territory Plan is required to be consistent with the National Capital Plan, which has supremacy in the overall planning hierarchy in the ACT. It is for this reason that the National Capital Plan has been used as the basis for land use definitions within the Master Plan. Current Airport development and proposals under this Master Plan are thus consistent with the National Capital Plan.

The land uses identified in this Master Plan are contained in Chapter 10. Consistent with Reg5.02 of the *Airports Regulations 1997*, where a land use is defined, these uses adopt the definitions in Appendix 1, which are derived from the National Capital Plan. Where not defined, these uses adopt the definition in the National Capital Plan.

Figure 4.1
NATIONAL CAPITAL PLAN - DEFINED OFFICE EMPLOYMENT CENTRES



Note Canberra Airport as a Defined Office Employment Centre and on the defined East-West Transport Corridor

Source: National Capital Plan

4.2 ACT Government

“Canberra International Airport is fundamentally important to this city, it’s fundamentally important in terms of our economy, socially, and in the context of our capacity as a community to relate to the rest of Australia, and to the world”

“It’s extremely important to business, it underpins to a very large extent our economy, and I am a great supporter of the Canberra International Airport.”, ACT Government Chief Minister Jon Stanhope on radio 15 May 2009

Canberra Airport works closely with all relevant areas of the ACT Government to ensure that the Airport is strongly integrated into the ACT strategic and planning framework. Canberra Airport regularly and comprehensively consults with the ACT Government, as outlined in greater detail in Chapter 3 and in particular, it has now established the Integration Committee to deal with issues of planning, development and the implementation of Commonwealth policy. Canberra Airport has also worked collaboratively with the ACT Government to deliver key infrastructure projects in the vicinity of Canberra Airport, such as the upgrade to Pialligo Avenue.

Canberra Airport has been recognised by the ACT Government as a critical piece of infrastructure to the ACT and the surrounding region, and the ACT Government has further acknowledged that the Airport and its ongoing growth must be encouraged as well as integrated into the urban form of the city.

4.2.1 Canberra Plan

Central to the ACT Government’s strategic planning is the formation of the Canberra Plan, outlining how the Government will achieve its goals in the next 30 years in a strategic manner. The most relevant components of the Canberra Plan for the Airport are the Economic White Paper and the Canberra Spatial Plan, which are addressed below in Sections 4.2.2 and Section 4.2.3. Both of these documents demonstrate the Airport’s importance to and integration with the city.

In August 2008, ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope launched a review of the Canberra Plan, *The Canberra Plan - Towards our Second Century*. The Canberra Plan acknowledges the importance of Canberra Airport in the region, and equally the importance of managing airport development in close consultation with the ACT Government.

“The Canberra International Airport is an important element of the ACT’s economy and the ACT Government will continue to support the planned expansion of both passenger and freight activity.

These developments complement our ongoing efforts to attract new migrants and businesses to the Territory, and also facilitate the diversification of the ACT economy by providing the opportunity for new economic activity.

It is imperative that the proposed airport expansion be well planned and managed in close consultation with the ACT Government.

Development at the Airport should take account of relevant ACT planning laws and policies in order to moderate significant impacts on metropolitan planning and local infrastructure provision.”

The Canberra Plan - Towards our Second Century (2008)

Canberra Airport believes its ongoing consultation program with the ACT Government has provided for mutually agreeable and successful outcomes in the past (such as delivering road infrastructure around the Airport) and looks forward to the continuation of such consultation.

Development at the Airport and the role of the Airport in the ACT’s economy is outlined in further detail in the Economic White Paper and Canberra Spatial Plan, described below.

4.2.2 Economic White Paper

“We should not fear strategies that pursue economic growth and development... Approvals and policies designed simply to maintain the status quo are more likely to be a recipe for stagnation.”

ACT Economic White Paper (2003)

The ACT Government will:

- “be unashamedly pro-business ... and make the ACT the premier business friendly location in Australia”; and
- “provide supportive planning and highly competitive infrastructure ... to give Canberra the look and feel of a vibrant and dynamic 21st century city.”

ACT Economic White Paper (2003)

The Economic White Paper outlines the ACT Government’s economic and policy framework to achieve sustainable growth and development. Canberra Airport’s role as a major employment generator and as a regional hub is well recognised in the White Paper.

By providing a wide variety of services in a sustainable manner, Canberra Airport is helping the ACT Government reach its goal of creating the right environment to attract knowledge-based creative workers. Workers in these industries demand high quality office accommodation and amenities located close to major interstate transport links. The Airport is providing the right environment for these workers.

The Economic White Paper recognises that the Airport has set the benchmark for the ACT Government in providing the best commercial environment for investors and recommends that it be emulated in other locations. Further, the Paper recognises that economic activity at the Airport has increased markedly since the privatisation of the Airport in 1998. This growth in economic activity and the resultant growth in employment have only been possible because Canberra Airport has actively developed many aspects of the bundle of rights purchased with

the Airport lease.

The Airport's role as a regional and metropolitan hub, and as a major activity centre, is explicitly recognised by the Economic White Paper in the following terms:

“Great cities have excellent transport connections. Since the ownership of Canberra Airport was transferred to private ownership, investment in the Airport and general economic activity around the Airport has increased markedly. The Master Plan, which is the major planning tool for the Airport, outlines a vision for the development of Canberra International Airport as a major passenger, freight and business hub serving the ACT Region.

Therefore it is essential that the Spatial Plan recognises the Airport's role as a generator of employment and a regional hub. In particular, transport and employment links between Civic and the Airport need to be given high priority.

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“The Government will recognise Canberra International Airport as a major activity centre and work with the Commonwealth Government and airport management to continue to upgrade connections to the Airport, especially from Civic.”

Economic White Paper, 2003.

4.2.3 The Canberra Spatial Plan

“In order to protect the Airport as a significant transport asset for the region, its operations need to be unconstrained by the potential limiting effects of residential development where airport noise would impact on residents. Conversely, growth at the Airport must have regard to the need to protect significant biodiversity assets on and around the Airport.”

“The scale and nature of development at the Airport provides employment opportunities not available elsewhere in the ACT. Planning to ensure that the Airport continues to play a major role in this region as a regional transport hub, bringing new jobs to the region, is of fundamental importance. NSW areas are also affected by aircraft noise while the economic benefits of the Airport are also important to NSW.”

Canberra Spatial Plan (2004)

The Canberra Spatial Plan sets out the ACT Government's strategic directions for the development of Canberra over the next 30 years and beyond. It is the ACT Government's key strategic planning document for directing and managing urban growth and change, and is part of a comprehensive, integrated strategic plan for Canberra's future.

The Spatial Plan confirms Canberra Airport's central role in terms of employment growth by identifying the Airport at the intersection of two of Canberra's three employment corridors. The Plan reveals that the three corridors will form the primary focus for employment in the ACT (refer Figure 4.2 overleaf).

Figure 4.2
CANBERRA SPATIAL PLAN 'H PLAN' EMPLOYMENT LOCATION STRATEGY



Note Canberra Airport at the intersection of two major employment corridors and denoted as an activity node.

The Airport is located on the main employment corridor between Belconnen through Civic, Barton, the Airport, to Queanbeyan. This corridor currently accommodates over 70% of Canberra's employment and contains a number of uses, most notably key office employment locations in Civic and in the Central National Area (of which the Airport is a part).

In addition, the Airport is located on the north-south employment corridor running through the Majura Valley through the Airport and Fyshwick to Hume. This north-south corridor is identified by the ACT Government in the Spatial Plan for the growth of, or is suitable for, a long and diverse list of uses including:

- industrial;
- broadacre commercial;
- tourism;
- recreation;
- transport related activities;
- bulky goods retailing;
- creative industries; and
- high-technology manufacturing.

This north-south corridor, and particularly the Majura Valley, is developing into a key Defence and security hub. With the Majura Training Area (MTA), Royal Military College (RMC), the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) and the Campbell Park Offices in the Valley, and the Australian Federal Police's (AFP) increasing presence in the Valley and on the Airport, the Majura Valley is already a key "security valley" for the Australian Government and support services. In addition, most of the operations in the Valley are in very close proximity to the Russell Defence offices. The trend of increasing Defence, AFP and ancillary security operations within the Majura Valley is expected to continue and Canberra Airport anticipates playing an increasing role as a major activity node in the Valley.

The National Capital Authority has supported the Canberra Spatial Plan in principle in terms of its employment corridor notion for the Majura Valley, in which the Airport is located.

Canberra Airport has also been identified in the Canberra Spatial Plan as a "Priority 1" employment area on this north-south employment corridor, to be developed in the short term. Further, the Spatial Plan integrates Canberra Airport into the planning framework of the city as the Spatial Plan designates Canberra Airport as an Employment Activity Node (refer Figure 4.2). It is also noted that the Spatial Plan identifies Canberra Airport as having 5-10% of the Territory's employment. This Master Plan's estimate of 25,000 jobs at the Airport in 2029/30 is thus consistent with the Spatial Plan.

Today, the development of business parks and other commercial property development are

primary use activities at airports because they are associated with, are ancillary to and enhance the operation and the viability of the airport. The Spatial Plan also outlines the importance of a wide range of complementary services to support the Activity Nodes.

Canberra Airport also welcomes the Spatial Plan's inclusion of Canberra Airport High Noise Corridor, identified in Map 11 (page 27) of the Spatial Plan as the "Aircraft Noise Protection Corridor".

Airport development has been undertaken consistent with the policy and planning intent of the Canberra Spatial Plan and Economic White Paper.

4.2.4 Territory Plan

The Territory Plan has been prepared and administered by the ACT Government in respect of all land in the ACT other than land classified as "Designated Area". The Territory Plan is required by Commonwealth legislation to be consistent with the National Capital Plan. In the event and to the extent of any such inconsistency, the Territory Plan has no effect.

The land uses and the development and activities permitted for each precinct at Canberra Airport are listed in land use tables in Chapter 10 of this Master Plan under the headings "Permitted and Intended Uses Include" and "Category". Consistent with Regulation 5.02 of the *Airports Regulations 1997*, these are defined by adopting the terminology of the National Capital Plan, with which the Territory Plan must be consistent.

Thus by virtue of the fact that it is consistent with the National Capital Plan, Canberra Airport is consistent with the Territory Plan.

4.3 NSW Government and Queanbeyan City Council

Whilst Canberra Airport does not lie within NSW, aircraft flying to and from Canberra Airport operate at low altitude over areas of south-eastern NSW, particularly Queanbeyan. Furthermore, Canberra Airport is an economic and social gateway for the ACT and the broader region, with a possible further role as a support to the increasingly constrained Sydney Airport.

This reality was acknowledged by the August 2006 Independent Panel of Inquiry into Queanbeyan land release. The Report of the Panel of Inquiry noted:

"It is the Panel's considered opinion that Canberra International Airport is a significant strategic regional asset and that curfew free operations are important for its continuing contribution to the entire Queanbeyan/ACT region. If it also succeeds in operating as an adjunct or overflow to the heavily constrained Sydney airports in the future then it could have strategic importance for NSW, beyond the immediate region."

Report of the Independent Panel of Inquiry into land release in Queanbeyan (2006)

The Commonwealth has identified the range of problems associated with state and local government policies with respect to land use planning around airports. In particular:

In many cases, the growth of urban populations around airports has contributed to the problems associated with aircraft noise. This is largely due to planning decisions made by state and local government planning agencies with responsibility for the land around airports.”

Commonwealth Government Aviation Green Paper, December 2008.

Therefore, the Green paper concludes that:

“It does not make sense to allow new noise-sensitive developments to occur in areas where they will lead to public concerns that may affect the long-term viability of the airport. In particular, there is every reason to avoid noise sensitive development in green field sites near airport flight paths.”

Commonwealth Government Aviation Green Paper, December 2008.

This highlights the necessity that Canberra Airport be formally recognised as a key infrastructure asset for the region through the regional integration of planning strategies and that the Airport’s long-term prosperity and growth is protected via appropriate land use planning under Airport flight paths and the provision of appropriate infrastructure links such as roads.

However, it is important to note that it was not until 2001 that the Queanbeyan City Council contemplated moving away from its previous policy of restricting residential use under flight paths. The 1974 Queanbeyan Structure Plan states:

“It will be necessary to exercise care in the siting of development. Generally, residential areas should be grouped away from major traffic routes and away from the flight path of the approach to Canberra Airport.”

Queanbeyan Structure Plan, August 1974

To avoid residential development under the flight paths, the Structure Plan proposed that that industrial and commercial land be located under aircraft flight paths:

“The flight path of the aircraft approaching Canberra Airport [will be] generally over the town centre and industrial areas”

Queanbeyan Structure Plan, August 1974

This policy remained and is reflected in the Queanbeyan Structure Plan 1994. The 1994 Structure Plan refers to the “Tralee Industrial Estate Option”, showing areas under the flight paths labeled as “Proposed Urban Industrial (subject to further investigation)”, indicating the Council’s preferred long-term planning for this land. The 1994 also reaffirms the aircraft noise zones of the 1974 plan.

Further, in July 2001, the Queanbeyan Council resolved “that the approval be given for the use of up to \$30,000 of the \$70,000 in the current Management Plan² for ‘Investigations for future development’ for a new project ‘Preliminary investigations into the future use of Tralee as industrial’” (Queanbeyan City Council Minutes 18 July 2001).

The motivation for the departure from the long-term policy of zoning this area under the flight paths as industrial and shifting to a policy of zoning it instead as residential is revealed in the Queanbeyan City 2004 Structure Plan:

“The 1994 Structure Plan identified the land known as Tralee near the Hume industrial estate as being suitable for urban or industrial purposes. In 2001, Council resolved to further investigate Tralee for future industrial purposes; however with a change in ownership of the land, Council has since resolved to commence rezoning the land for residential purposes. Development of this land for residential purposes would impact on Queanbeyan’s future good quality industrial land stock.”

Queanbeyan City 2004 Structure Plan

Notwithstanding the above, Queanbeyan City Council and Planning NSW are considering proposals for thousands of homes under Canberra Airport’s flight paths, which if successful, put at risk the ongoing unconstrained aviation growth of the Airport. Queanbeyan City Council also continues to call for a curfew on Canberra Airport that would cause significant detriment to current and future airport operations.

4.3.1 Sydney-Canberra Corridor Strategy

In July 2008, the NSW Government released its Sydney-Canberra Corridor strategy as a “25-year blueprint to guide growth, improve housing affordability and protect valuable natural resources along the regional corridor between Sydney and Canberra.” The Plan identifies the need for an additional 25,200 homes, including 10,000 for Queanbeyan (incorporating both urban infill and greenfields sites), for an expanded population of 46,350 by the year 2031.

The Strategy notes that:

“Canberra International Airport is a significant asset for the ACT and the Corridor. The Airport provides commercial flights to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. Regional services are also provided to Newcastle and Albury. The airport contributes to the local economy through movement of people, tourism, employment and freight cartage.”

Sydney-Canberra Corridor Strategy (2008)

² The Queanbeyan City Council had allocated \$70,000 for the “Investigation for future development” for the entire City of Queanbeyan (Queanbeyan City Council Management Plan 2001/2002 to 2003/2004), of which \$30,000 was allocated to the preliminary investigations into the use of Tralee as industrial.

Nevertheless, the Strategy contains proposals, also contained within the 2031 Queanbeyan Residential and Economic Strategy (outlined below at Section 4.3.2) for residential development under Canberra Airport flight paths. Such an outcome would severely hamper Canberra Airport's ability to continue to grow and be the significant asset for the region noted in the Strategy.

4.3.2 2031 Queanbeyan Residential and Economic Strategy

Planning NSW published its review of Queanbeyan's 2031 Residential and Economic Strategy in April 2007 following a submission from Queanbeyan City Council. It acknowledges that "protection of the potential for future growth and development of Canberra Airport needs to be recognised and considered as it is an important piece of regional infrastructure which will continue to contribute to the economic development of the region". A revision to this 2031 Strategy was approved by the NSW Planning Minister, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, in December 2008. This Strategy constitutes Planning NSW's current intentions for land-use planning for the Queanbeyan City Council area.

Whilst the revised Strategy acknowledges Canberra Airport's Ultimate Practical Capacity ANEF, the Strategy relies upon the NSW Government's s117(2) Directions, which allows residential development up to ANEF 25, to validate its proposal for residential development under flight paths. Approximately half the proposed homes are located between ANEF 20 and 25. Following analysis of the community response to this Master Plan and the impact of current aircraft noise on residents in houses near but not under the flight paths (i.e.: outside the High Noise Corridor and ANEC 15), it is clear that the s117(2) Directions are not reflective of the importance of aircraft noise on the community around Canberra Airport, and that building houses in the locations proposed in the Strategy would not be appropriate.

Canberra Airport confirms its ongoing opposition to plans contained within the Strategy that would see approximately 5,000 homes under flight paths, and notes Airservices Australia's advice contained at Chapter 14 regarding the outcome for the region if this residential development is permitted to proceed.

Canberra Airport has consulted extensively with Queanbeyan City Council and Planning NSW regarding aircraft noise issues, and has worked with the community (especially Jerrabomberra) to minimise the effects of aircraft noise. Indeed, following a request by former NSW Planning Minister Frank Sartor, Canberra Airport engaged independent planning Consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff to produce a draft report identifying up to 22,000 residential blocks outside high aircraft noise areas to allow for the ongoing growth of Queanbeyan.

Canberra Airport will continue to work with the NSW Government and Queanbeyan City Council on regional land use planning issues including aircraft noise. In this regard, Canberra Airport will shortly be inviting representatives from the NSW Government to join the integration committee with the ACT.

4.4 Cross-border land-use planning issues

Canberra Airport's location near the ACT/NSW border has created certain land-use planning conflicts, especially in relation to proposed residential developments under Canberra Airport flight paths.

Notwithstanding a Cross-Border Settlement Strategy and Water Strategy agreed between the ACT, NSW and Commonwealth Governments, as outlined above Canberra Airport believes that a number of land use planning proposals by the NSW Government will have a detrimental effect on the future operations and efficiency of Canberra Airport as well as the residents of NSW and the ACT.

In relation to these proposed residential developments, the ACT Government has stated:

“[...] the ACT Government has no direct control over the development and rezoning process for Tralee [in NSW]. However, the ACT Government's interest in this matter relates to achieving good planning outcomes for all of the population of the area, irrespective of whether they live in the ACT or NSW, whilst also protecting significant infrastructure assets such as Canberra International Airport and the Hume Industrial Estate from incompatible land uses.”

Jon Stanhope MLA, ACT Chief Minister, 24 December 2008

The Commonwealth's 2008 Aviation Green Paper also highlights the importance of regional integration to protect airports.

“it is important that state governments and local governments meet their responsibilities to establish zoning policies, in consultation with airports, that ensure development near airports and under flight paths is compatible with noise exposure.”

Commonwealth Government Aviation Green Paper, December 2008.

As indicated above, there continues to be issues involved with integrating NSW local planning strategies with the ongoing operations of Canberra Airport. However, Canberra Airport expects that in light of the above Commonwealth policy outcomes and the full consideration of community submissions to the Master Plan consultation, and through joining the integration committee, the NSW Government will work with Canberra Airport, the ACT Government and the Commonwealth to resolve land-use planning policies in the vicinity of Canberra Airport.