

CAMPBELL ACT 2612



7 MAY 2009

Tuesday, 5th May, 2009

Canberra Airport
2 Brindabella Circuit
Brindabella Business Park
CANBERRA AIRPORT ACT 2609

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are writing to address issues relating to the 2009 Canberra Airport Preliminary Draft Master Plan.

Flawed process

Before addressing the substantive issues, we would like to point out there is a serious shortcoming in the process for public comment. Of course we realise this criticism should really be directed to the Federal Government. As public comments are required to be submitted to the airport -- the interested party -- it is not possible to have a truly open and objective assessment of these issues.

Aircraft noise concerns -- health effects of disturbed sleep

As former Sydney residents living 21 kilometres from Sydney airport, but under the flight path, we are very much aware of the noise from large jets. When planes were landing from the north, we were at least thankful that a curfew ensured we were only woken just before 6 AM every morning. There was no escaping the noise. With the planned extension of Canberra airport runway, larger jets will most certainly exceed the 65 decibels your report claims as the maximum noise level (page 80) as this level is already being exceeded on occasion, as recorded by the Hackett noise monitor.

Freight hub noise

The proposal to use Canberra airport to develop a freight hub facility is likely to increase the number of heavy planes including during the night. These will inevitably cause disturbing spikes of noise pollution as Canberra is a particularly quiet city at night. It is not possible to quarantine the noise -- we know from experience.

To quote from the World Health Organisation website: "Sleep disturbance is one of the most serious effects of environmental noise. The WHO guidelines say that for good sleep, sound level should not exceed 30 dB(A) for continuous background noise, and individual noises events exceeding 45 dB(A) should be avoided."

http://www.euro.who.int/Noise/activities/20040304_1

Again, it is essential that continuous independent monitoring of noise levels ensures accurate figures.

Other pollution issues

In addition to the noise, large jets and the consequent connecting vehicles -- trucks, trains, cars and planes -- will add substantially to Canberra's greenhouse gas production. This will contribute to global warming, air pollution, traffic congestion and accidents.

Cost/benefit

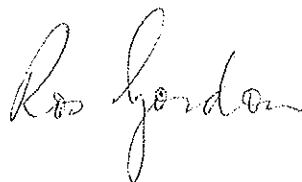
The plan asserts the benefits of the airport expansion will include jobs and business advantages. However these need to be properly assessed as part of a larger, independent cost/benefit analysis which also takes full account of the short, medium and long term environmental and social costs to the community of this plan, whose benefits seem largely to flow to the private profit of the airport and its employees. Failure to do so is inevitable as a result of the flawed process.

Summary of requested changes to the plan

The airport plan should include a curfew on planes landing and taking off between 11 PM and 6 AM. The freight hub concept should be reconsidered in light of noise, greenhouse pollution and other negative social and environmental costs to the community, especially sleep deprivation. The process of assessing the plan should be amended to ensure it is properly independent.

Yours sincerely,

Ros Gordon:



Col Gordon:

