

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



- 6 MAY 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to your invitation for public comment on your 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan I wish to make the following comments and objections. I have sent variations of this letter to a range of elected federal and ACT government representatives.

### **Canberra – a very special capital**

Canberra is a very special capital. It is often referred to as the bush capital for a good reason. A Capital that has not (yet) done the mistakes of many capitals around the world that have expanded in an unsustainable manner and are no longer places in which people live close to nature and in a respectful manner with each other.

We love living in Canberra. We love it for the quality of life it offers. We go for a run in its peaceful bushland and commute by bike to professional meaningful work. There are not many capitals in the world where this is possible.

Of course Canberra is expanding and I support a healthy development of this capital. But I strongly believe that Canberra – probably unlike any other capital in the world – has the potential to become a model sustainable capital that could expand economically while developing in peace with its environmental and social surroundings.

Canberra, with an emphasis on improving its public transport, could become a flagship for Australia, a showcase capital, to be proudly presented to the world.

In a world of dramatically changing climate conditions, and many social illnesses in society, this could put Australia in a prime place.

### **The airport Master Plan – taking a completely different avenue**

The proposed expansion of the airport as outlined in the 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan, however, takes the development of this capital into a completely different direction.

Its emphasis on bigger, noisier and more frequent planes, plus a 24 hour freight hub, with a substantial increase in truck traffic to Sydney, would have severe consequences for Canberra and beyond:

- Unacceptable levels of greenhouse gases: The ACT Government has been warned it will not meet its targets to cut greenhouse emissions if Canberra Airport goes ahead with expansion plans. A report by The Australia Institute has looked into the impact of Canberra Airport's plans to expand flights and

increase passenger numbers. It has found the ACT's target to reduce emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 is unlikely to be achieved if the plans go ahead.

- Unacceptable level of road traffic to/from Sydney and in the region: To plan a virtually new freight hub that heavily relies on road transport by trucks is in this age of acute climate change unacceptable. Australia will have to make an effort to improve public transport by fast trains between cities, not only for passengers but also for freight.
- Unacceptable aircraft noise levels for the local population: The proposition to operate a 24 hour freight hub at Canberra Airport is a significant change to the current usage of the airport. It would involve bigger, noisier and more frequent planes. Noise levels are already above World Health Organisation standards (see <http://www.curfew4canberra.org.au>) and are particularly worrying for residents' night time peace and quiet. Sydney residents have their sleep protected from aircraft noise by a curfew from 11pm to 6pm, and I expect the same for Canberra residents.

### **The airport Masterplan - Inadequate Information**

The 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan for the Canberra Airport is badly referenced and provides wrong, misleading or no information on crucial aspects:

- It does not clearly state how many more planes would how frequently cross our night sky.
- It does not provide details on whether the planes would primarily approach and depart from the north or the south.
- It does provide misleading maps picturing noise expansion funnelled in a drain-like direction with no impact on the surroundings to the sides of such 'drain'. The new Hackett Noise Monitor (see WebTrak at [www.cbf.webtrak-lochard.com](http://www.cbf.webtrak-lochard.com)) has already shown that existing 737 aircraft regularly generate 65 decibels and over in Hackett, although the report states that: 'no residents within the ACT... will be exposed at any time to noise over 65 decibels...' (page 80). The community has the right to know how a freight hub would impact on their homes, and particularly their sleeping hours.
- It does not provide any detailed overview of how many trucks would travel on roads at what frequency.
- Claims that existing aircraft noise protection measures will adequately protect residents from future aircraft noise are not supported by any evidence.
- In addition, the airport has conducted minimum community participation and would require expanding its efforts drastically.

### **Inadequate federal laws around airport developments**

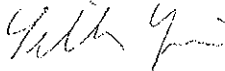
The expansion of the Canberra airport should have to undergo equally scrutinized checks and balances as any other development in the ACT does. The fact that airports are federally administered and therefore fall outside state or territory development laws is appalling. The expansion of the Canberra airport would require a substantial environmental impact assessment, a substantial social impact assessment (including independent noise studies) and a substantial economic impact assessment.

## My requests

- That you reconsider the approach suggested, and consider a more sustainable path for Canberra's future, including ways to reduce -rather than increase- greenhouse gases, and ways to expand public transport and intercity railway links for passengers and freight.
- That you revise the 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan and reference all data and provide correct, objective information on crucial aspects as outlined above.
- If plans for an expanded airport go ahead, that you ensure:
  - a night time curfew on aircraft movements from 11pm to 6am
  - No 24 hour freight hub or second Sydney airport
  - Recognition of World Health Organisation health standards regarding sleep disturbance.
- That you ensure that independent noise information on the proposed 24-hour freight hub will be provided, and the Government provide extensions for the Masterplan that Canberra residents can further comment after the noise expert appointed by the ACT Government reports later this year.
- That the Government conducts a critical review of the existing laws around airport expansions and their exclusion of state and territory planning laws.

Thank you very much for taking the time to address these issues. I am looking forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Silke Speier

Ainslie ACT 2602  
3 May 2009