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Canberra Airport 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan

The Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) strongly supports Canberra Airport's 2009 Preliminary Draft Master Plan.

TTF is a national, member-funded CEO forum, advocating the public policy interests of the 200 most prestigious corporations and institutions in the Australian tourism, transport, aviation, property and infrastructure sectors.

The continued unhindered growth of all aviation operations at Canberra Airport is vital for Canberra, the ACT, south east NSW, the tourism, transport and infrastructure sectors and the Australian economy.

Canberra and its surrounding regions must continue to enjoy the investment certainty and employment, commercial and tourism benefits that flow from having an efficient, 24-hour curfew-free airport unencumbered by off-airport development – a position supported by the Australian Government's National Aviation Policy Green Paper.

Economic contribution

Canberra Airport makes a significant contribution to the local, state and national economies. As the 2009 Master Plan identifies, since privatisation the local owners of Canberra Airport have invested over \$600 million in the airport - approximately 10 times its purchase price and at least 100 times the amount invested by the Commonwealth Government (in the five years prior to privatisation).

It is critical that this level of investment be maintained, and, through the strategies outlined in the PDMP, allowed to grow over the next 20 years and beyond. Planned investment in critical infrastructure by Canberra Airport to meet forecast passenger growth is significant, including \$350 million on new terminal and aviation facilities.

TTF expects this will further strengthen the airport's contribution to the tourism industry, as well as to the economic development of the ACT and NSW. In a recent study commissioned by TTF, consulting firm URS¹ estimated that each billion dollars of capital expenditure at airports generates around:

¹ *Assessing the Impact of Airport Privatisation: Final Report* can be found at www.tff.org.au.

- \$3.5 billion of gross output
- \$1.47 billion of value added and
- \$0.8 billion of wage and salary income to Australian workers.

TTF estimates the Airport's \$600 million investment has resulted in over:

- \$2.1 billion of gross output
- \$882 million of value added and
- \$480 million of wage and salary income to Australian workers.

In particular, the growth of Canberra Airport as outlined in its 2009 Master Plan will further strengthen its economic contribution to the regional tourism industry. Canberra Airport now has direct services to all state capital cities, as well as key regional centres such as Newcastle, Albury, and Townsville.

The arrival of Tiger Airways Australia and growth in Virgin Blue destinations from Canberra has opened the regional tourism industry up to new markets and demographics, resulting in what TTF believes to be a higher than expected increase in leisure traffic than previously thought.

Freight operations

Canberra Airport's location, 24 hour operation and good road connection with Sydney also presents an excellent opportunity to develop the airport as a highly efficient hub for movement of time sensitive freight around the country.

In this regard, TTF strongly supports the Federal Government's commitment to maintain a north-south and east-west network (including Canberra) of curfew free airports as outlined in the National Aviation Policy Green Paper.

TTF is confident that Canberra Airport has taken all appropriate measures to ensure there will be no adverse impacts on the local community from aircraft and vehicle movements. This includes ensuring trucks operating to Sydney remain away from residential areas at all times using designated heavy vehicle routes and, a prohibition on aircraft overflying noise abatement areas at night which protects 99.5 per cent of the Canberra community.

The development of Canberra Airport as a freight hub will also provide noise respite for Sydney residents from overnight freight aircraft, and free up valuable landing slots and land at Sydney Airport for the expansion of commercial passenger services.

Residential development

The single biggest threat to Canberra Airport's future growth and economic contribution as outlined in the PDMP is residential development directly under Canberra Airport's southern flight path in the high noise corridor.

TTF remains very concerned about Village Building Company's planned residential development under the Airport's southern flight path, which is supported by Queanbeyan City Council and the NSW Government.

This development not only threatens the long term viability and curfew free operation of Canberra Airport, but will also be a major commercial constraint on the regional

economy and an imposition on current and future residents. Any restrictions on the airport will slow tourism growth and threaten jobs.

It is therefore critical that the Federal Government work proactively to prevent inappropriate developments around airports by ensuring there are appropriate land-use planning arrangements in place.

Road infrastructure

TTF would also like to acknowledge Canberra Airport's commitment to ensuring there is appropriate and efficient road infrastructure within and to and from the airport. This is demonstrated no better than the the duplication of Pialligo Avenue, which has seen Canberra Airport contribute \$8 million of the \$15.5 million cost of the project and manage the entire works.

Sustainable development

While the economic benefits from Canberra Airport's growth and development are significant, Canberra Airport's focus on achieving long-term economic, operational, environmental and social sustainability is equally important. TTF considers Canberra Airport to be an industry leader with regard to sustainability, as demonstrated by the soon to be built Southern Concourse Terminal, which will reduce the building's carbon emissions by 75 per cent compared to the existing facility.

Canberra Airport's management team have effectively ensured public consultation and engagement with the wider tourism, transport and infrastructure sectors and the local community in the development of the PDMP.

TTF is confident, based on the processes outlined in the 2009 PDMP, that Canberra Airport will continue its 'good neighbour' approach in its delivery of day-to-day operations and infrastructure development.

To discuss any aspect of this submission in more detail, please contact Caroline Wilkie, National Manager Aviation & Transport, on (02) 9240 2016, or at cwilkie@tff.org.au.

Yours sincerely



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