

SUBMISSION TO DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY STATEMENT

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in response to the invitation for submissions on the Issues Paper for a National Aviation Policy Statement. The two main issues I would like to address are as follows:

1. Airport noise and the need for a night time curfew

I am vehemently opposed to the operation of aircraft, for any purpose and in any location, between the hours of 11pm to 6am. Living in Canberra and close to the airport, I am currently subjected to aircraft noise, particularly from 6am onward. This is sufficiently noisy to wake me on occasions. I know if these flights were to occur intermittently during the night that there would be times when I would be woken up and would probably have difficulty getting back to sleep.

Mechanisms for complaining about noise are simply ineffective. I have a young family, work and community commitments and cannot spend time ringing in and complaining, particularly when there is really no likelihood of anything being done about it. It's a case of the horse bolting - once the Canberra International Airport has approval to increase its overnight operations, there is really very little the community will be able to do about it, given that the Airport will have made a significant investment in expanding its capacity.

2. Greenhouse gas emissions

The issues paper states "technological advances are not proving sufficient to negate the ongoing growth in aviation emissions driven by increasing demand". It is unconscionable that the Government is therefore promoting 'just in time' freight operations via the airline industry. Dr Hugh Saddler's recent report "Australia's Energy Revolution" calls for investment in rail networks as part of a strategy that would enable Australia to source 40% of its energy needs from a renewable source within a decade.

Given recent Australian research outlining the increased rate of Antarctic ice melt (50% worse than the previous worst case scenario), it is high time that the Government put greenhouse issues at the centre of all new policy and start planning a low or no carbon future for this country. It is extremely short sighted to continue a 'business as usual' approach with regard to this extremely polluting sector, no matter what proportion of our total emissions it makes. Market mechanisms via carbon offsets and trading are unlikely to provide an effective means of curbing aircraft emissions. By shifting its policy focus away from promoting airport trade in favour of an efficient rail sector (possibly powered electrically), the Government could still facilitate efficient freight movement, but in a responsible way which won't cost us our future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues.

Margaret Corcoran
Canberra