

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

Dear Sir/Madam;

**Re: Canberra International Airport (CIA) Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2008
AND Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement**

I have taken the opportunity to read the above documents and wish to respond to the invitations for public comment on same.

Planning and Infrastructure

As stated in the second document, "But airports are not islands, and the growth of the airports can impact on the communities surrounding the airports, particularly through increased noise and traffic." My initial concern with the activities at Canberra International Airport (CIA) is that they have been undertaken without the necessity for adhering to planning and infrastructure guidelines of local authorities and without the checks and balances that guide all other developments in a democracy. Development has galloped ahead with no consideration for the populace of the ACT and neighbouring Queanbeyan as far as roads and public transport are concerned. Commercial developments have made an absolute shambles of traffic flow along Majura Road and Pialligo Avenue. The installation of numerous roundabouts, all controlled by give way signs and thus ensuring that the workers in these commercial enterprises have the right of way of departure in the afternoons over the previously free-flowing traffic along these routes. The Aviation Policy Statement comments, "...recent developments at major Australian airport sites include substantial commercial development not directly connected with aeronautical uses. This non-aeronautical development can be important to diversify the revenue base of the airport operators and strengthen the capacity to invest in improved terminal, runway or other aeronautical facilities. However, there is a challenge to ensure the nature or extent of non aeronautical investment does not prejudice either the safety of the airport and its operations or the long-term development of aeronautical uses on the site. The Australian Government's objective remains to ensure the leased federal airports continue to develop as airports."

The absence of public transport to these commercial premises (Brindabella Business Park) as well as linkages to cycle paths has ensured the maximum possible number of motor vehicles on these sites. Putting the cart before the horse in this way, the CIA has demonstrated total disdain for the people of the ACT and Queanbeyan.

As noted under the National Aviation Policy Statement, "Under the Airports Act, the key mechanisms to control planning and development are the Airport Master Plans (renewed every five years) and Major Development Plans. Approvals of plans can have significant implications for planning around the airport and for the provision of transport and other infrastructure. State and local government authorities are consulted, as are the local communities, in consideration of those plans but the final decision rests with the Minister for Infrastructure in the Australian Government. In some cases, conditions are imposed on an approval to address issues raised by authorities, such as a requirement for the airport to contribute to the cost of off-airport roadworks, but the approval of both on and off airport development is often an area of

dissatisfaction between the different spheres of government.” I would add, and the community, as far as the Canberra International Airport is concerned. The Policy Statement also notes, “The increasing scale of non aeronautical development proposed at airports is testing the appropriate balance between non-aeronautical developments and the operator’s primary obligation to operate and develop the airport as an airport.”

Airport Noise and the Necessity for a Curfew

On p. 76 of the first document it is stated, “Canberra and the Queanbeyan community does not and should not suffer the effects of aircraft noise.” then on p. 84, “A curfew is not necessary at Canberra International Airport now or in the future. A curfew is not in the best interests of the community.” on p. 85, “It is forecast that the frequency of noise exposure will increase in the High Noise Corridors as aviation traffic grows.” and on p. 107, “As the frequency of flights grows, the size of aircraft grows, the increased frequency of night-time operations grows and as on-airport operations grow, the amount of aviation noise on the departure and approach routes and on the airport will increase.”

Noise associated with the airport is already and has been for some time, a concern for residents in some areas of north and south Canberra, Queanbeyan and areas further south and east despite the claim in the document that it has no effect on 99.5% of the population. As residents, we have to date been spared the worst scenario, one that is not permitted in Sydney, a 24-hour transport hub for people and goods. A 24-hour operational site is an integral part of this and the previous Master Plan. CIA may have had that signed off by the Federal Government when it bought the airport but rest assured, it has not been signed off by the people of the ACT and Queanbeyan. In contrast to the view of the CIA that a curfew is not in the best interest of the community, I and many others vehemently disagree and point out that a 24-hour transport hub is not in the best interest of the community. Unfettered economic growth at the expense of the local area, the country and the world is an increasingly blinkered view of the world today and particularly in the future.

A dramatic increase in the frequency of flights, the size of the aircraft landing and taking off and of daily operations will encroach on many people, waking and trying to sleep, in these environs. CIA effectively, are taking Sydney’s problem and dumping its solution on the people of the ACT and Queanbeyan. Many of those people do not want to be the solution to the problem of Sydney nor to share noise with Sydney, at a massive cost to their amenities and profit to CIA and its shareholders. Canberra residents should be afforded the same level of protection from night time aircraft noise as Sydney residents. Exposure to aircraft noise at night has an adverse impact on health, as demonstrated in the submissions justifying a curfew in Sydney. Permitting unrestricted 24 hour operations of large passenger and cargo aircraft over Canberra will potentially have major impacts on the quality of life of residents of Canberra and Queanbeyan. Economic development ought not be at the expense of community wellbeing. In sharp contrast to the view of the CIA (p. 85, see above), a curfew is necessary at Canberra International Airport now and in the future. A curfew is in the best interests of the community. A night time curfew is valid, necessary and as a precautionary step to protect residents from excessive and continual noise intrusion that will occur if the proposed major expansions to Canberra Airport’s operations proceed.

The aviation policy document asks the question, “How can the protection of the communities around airports from undue aircraft noise best be addressed as demand for services continues to grow?” A curfew answers the question but the equally important issue is the continuing growth in the demand for services. From all

environmental aspects, the concept of a freight hub should not be centred on air services but rather on much more environmentally sound rail services, an area where the neglect of transport infrastructure in the past decade in Australia is so glaringly obvious.

Environmental Resources

On p. 106 of the first document, environmental resources which might reasonably be expected to be associated with the implementation of the Master Plan are listed. Astoundingly, the word carbon or the expression carbon footprint earns no mention, this at a time when climate change and how it is to be dealt with on a global scale makes headline news almost daily. Expansion of the aviation industry with its increasing carbon footprint is not in the best interests of the people of the ACT, Queanbeyan, New South Wales, Australia nor the world. The entire concept is totally contradictory to the efforts of CIA to develop environmentally sound and ecological sustainable commercial operations on the CIA site. Locating Sydney's second airport in Canberra is equally detrimental to the concept of sustainability within the transportation industry. That CIA would apply sustainability principles and best practise to one half of its business and totally ignore it in the other half, also beggars belief.

The document states on p. 110, "Air quality at the Airport and in Canberra more generally is excellent. No significant adverse impact is expected from future Airport operations." This again beggars belief, given the enormous increase in the frequency of flights, the size of aircraft landing and taking off, and the increased daily operations proposed on the airport site.

The policy statement rightly focuses on this issue, "Greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft engines are the subject of significant public attention in response to the forecast growth in air traffic, scientific evidence about the impact of climate change and escalating community concern." And asks, "What practical steps can the aviation industry take right now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Are carbon offset schemes enough? What measures should the aviation industry be taking in the short-medium term to reduce emissions?"

Conclusions

I would like to see the voters of the ACT have the opportunity to decide on the following:

- increased ACT government control of airport development
- establishment of a curfew on nocturnal aircraft movements
- establishment of a 24-hour freight hub
- establishment of Canberra International Airport as Sydney's second airport

Yours sincerely,

David M. Spratt
31 Richards Street
HACKETT ACT 2602

10 June 2008