

6 October 2017

Aircraft Operations

Aviation Environment Branch

Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

GPO Box 594

CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

To Whom It May Concern

I write to oppose the proposed amendments to the *Air Navigation (Essendon Airport) Regulations 2001*, which will impact the operations at Essendon Airport.

I became a member of Essendon Airport's Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) following my election to the State District of Essendon in November 2014. I have been a regular participant at these meetings and have chaired meetings when required.

At our meeting on 16 June 2017, the issues around the curfew were raised but the discussion was general in nature. No proposal was provided to the CACG at that time nor was any explanation provided to the CACG as to why the curfew needed to be amended.

At the following meeting on 8 September 2017, representatives from the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development advised the CACG that the *Air Navigation (Essendon Airport) Regulations 2001* would be proposed to be amended and that the consultation period would commence the next business day and last for a month.

The lack of dialogue or engagement with the CACG on one of the most significant issues that relates to Essendon Airport is appalling. The purpose of the quarterly CACG meetings has to be questioned when the Turnbull Government and Essendon Fields decide to embark on a unilateral course of action that excludes the involvement or engagement of the CACG. If the Turnbull Government and Essendon Fields believe this behavior is in any way appropriate, then it would be better to formally disband the CACG and allow local representatives, such as myself, to pursue individual cases of concern about Essendon Fields on a case by case basis.

I also note that the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development has not provided any resources to engage my community in consultation or discussion around the proposed amendments. The Department's failure has effectively excluded my community



from any consultation or discussion around this proposal. This is treating the community with contempt and gives the impression that the passing of the amendments is a *fait accompli*. I again reiterate my previous comments that this is treating the community and the CACG with absolute contempt.

Like many of my constituents, I was shocked to learn of the plane crash at Essendon Fields earlier this year. At this stage, we are still not certain what caused this crash and nor do we know what the learnings are from this tragedy to ensure that this does not happen again. Instead, the Federal Government and Essendon Fields have taken it upon themselves to seek to amend the regulations whilst we await the findings from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's investigation into the accident. Rushing through these changes when we are uncertain as to the cause of the crash is premature and entirely inappropriate.

Essendon Fields and the Turnbull Government have failed to present a persuasive argument as to why these regulations should be amended. At every stage throughout this brief and truncated process, they have sought to exclude the CACG and my community from the decision making process. As a result, my constituents do not have confidence that the proposed amendments are in the best interest of our local community.

It is for these reasons that I oppose the amendments of the *Air Navigation (Essendon Airport) Regulations 2001*.

Yours Sincerely,



Danny Pearson MP
State Member for Essendon