



29 November 2023

Director, Aviation White Paper Project Office
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email - aviationgreenpaper@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Aviation Green Paper

We refer to the Aviation Green Paper released on 7 September 2023.

This submission is made on behalf of the Flight Path Working Group of Mount Glorious Community Association. We request that this emailed letter be accepted as a formal submission to the Aviation Green Paper 2023 consultation process.

Background

Mount Glorious is a small mountain village located on the D'Aguilar Range adjacent to D'Aguilar National Park. Our community is about 35km (direct line) west of Brisbane Airport and around 45km (around 1 hour travel time) by road from the airport. Our community is elevated at around 2,500 feet.

For some time we have been involved in a range of consultation processes with Airservices Australia in relation to flight paths associated with the new parallel runway at Brisbane Airport. Currently, we are involved in a consultation process with Airservices which involves proposed changes to flight paths that will materially adversely affect our mountain community.

Flight Path Working Group
Mount Glorious Community Association Inc
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Our experiences with these consultation processes lead us to make the following submission in relation to the Aviation Green Paper.

Aircraft Noise

Part 6.1 of the Green Paper addresses the issue of Noise.

ANEF

On page 92, in the second dot point, the following question is posed - *“How could the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast, and use of the ANEF in Government planning processes, be improved?”*

We make the following comments in response to that question:

- (a) the EPNdB (effective perceived noise level) component of the ANEF was based on a survey of people living in the vicinity of major capital city airports approximately 30 to 40 years ago and the threshold level of 20 ANEF units for an acceptable noise level in residential areas (Table A1 in AS 2021) indicates that at this level approximately 10% of the population would be seriously affected and 45% of the population would be either seriously or moderately affected. We suggest that the acceptable level of aircraft noise should be revised on the basis that community tolerance may have changed over time and the current ANEF threshold for acceptability is unreasonably high as it disadvantages approximately half of the affected population;
- (b) the ANEF measure, while intended for future land use planning, should be used to evaluate the effect of aircraft noise on existing established community infrastructure where changes to ANEF measures will be created by the introduction of new flight paths. Community consultation to date has not made reference to this measure. From our own experience with consultation processes around proposed flight path changes, we believe the consultation should include existing and revised ANEF measures to help the community understand the noise impact of what is propose;
- (c) use of the ANEF acceptability threshold should take into account the effect of aircraft noise in semi-rural and hamlet-style communities with very low ambient background noise;
- (d) page 85 of the Green Paper states that *“Land use planning is the most effective way to manage the impacts of aircraft noise”*. However we make the point that, as a mitigation strategy, land use planning is totally ineffective for existing communities affected by later changes to airport infrastructure and revisions to operating flight paths; and
- (e) we note that Figure 10 on page 97 appears to be based on actual data to 2003 with a forecast projection to 2021. The 2021 forecast of just under 1800 total scheduled

hours flown appears to be in error as for a large part of the time during 2021 there were no international or domestic aircraft flying anywhere in Australia.

Noise impacts and environmental assessments

In Part 6.1 (page 107) there is reference to environmental assessments under the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC Act) and Airservices conducting Post Implementation Reviews as being mechanisms that ensure proper consideration of impacts on the community.

We make the following comments:

- (a) community consultation in relation to proposed flight path changes must include data about expected noise levels caused by proposed changes to flight paths. In the current consultation processes we are involved in with Airservices, our community has no information about likely noise levels arising from flight paths being moved very close to our community, other than to be advised the our community does not fall within 60dB and 70dB noise contours. The absence of information about likely noise levels significantly impedes our understanding of what is being proposed & its impact on our community and limits our ability to meaningfully engage in the consultation process.

The response to the Green Paper needs to address the framework for community consultation to ensure adequate information is provided about likely noise impacts;

- (b) it is not clear to us in the current consultation process we are involved in with Airservices that the proposed changes to flight paths will actually trigger a review under the EPBC Act or some other publicly-consulted review of relevant Environmental Authority. This seems extraordinary to us, given our small mountain village has not previously been significantly affected by commercial aircraft noise, now faces a very significant increase in aircraft movements & associated noise and there are no noise-sharing or abatement proposals put forward by Airservices to mitigate the impact.

Our concerns are particularly magnified by the following:

- (i) our village is surrounded by protected National Park and is home to many protected native species including near-threatened, vulnerable and endangered wildlife & plants;
- (ii) our area has regionally significant scenic amenity and is part of a regional biodiversity corridor that is identified as an area to protect and nurture under the Queensland Government's ShapingSEQ 50 year regional plan for South East Queensland;
- (iii) our area is Brisbane's largest naturally vegetated water catchment; and

- (iv) our area offers significant recreational amenity and greenspace values for people in the surrounding cities of Moreton Bay and Brisbane, as well as from places further afield.

The flight path changes proposed in our area should be more than sufficient to trigger a review of the relevant Environmental Authority. The regulatory framework must ensure full, publicly-consulted, environmental assessment of change proposals like those currently put forward under Phase 3 of the Noise Action Plan for Brisbane.

Aircraft Noise Ombudsman

Part 6 of the Green Paper makes reference to governance arrangements relating to the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman.

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman is responsible for investigating complaints about aircraft noise. Its Charter says its purpose is to provide independent oversight of Airservices Australia's aircraft noise-related activities, including handling of complaints, monitoring of community consultation processes in relation to aircraft noise, the presentation & distribution of aircraft noise-related information and undertaking systemic issues reviews of aircraft noise management by Airservices.

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman is currently appointed by and reports to the Board of Airservices Australia (Aircraft Noise Ombudsman Charter paragraphs 16 and 19).

In Chapter 6 of the Green Paper, a question is posed as to whether governance arrangements for the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman should be improved to provide greater independence, including publishing its findings and reports.

We believe the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman should be fully independent of Airservices Australia. The role should, in our view, be under the remit of the Commonwealth Ombudsman and should be adequately resourced and funded by the Australia Government. The existing arrangements where the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman is appointed by and reports to the Board of Airservices Australia causes, at the very least, the perception of a lack of independence and that the Ombudsman may be captive to the agency it is regulating. This greatly risks undermining public confidence in the Ombudsman's role, independence and recommendations.

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman should be a fully independent office.

We also believe the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman should have a greater role and associated legislative powers to investigate adverse noise events (including the power to compel production of documents and other information) and to enforce compliance with existing regulations. The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman should also investigate community concerns

where engagement activities by Airservices for proposed flight path changes fail to provide a satisfactory outcome for affected communities.

Finally, we support the findings and reports of the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman being made public (unless the complainant objects to such publication).

Publication of this submission

We do not object to this submission being published on the Department's website, provided personal information including our signatures are redacted. If any interpretation is provided in relation to what we have said in this submission, we request the right to review and (if necessary) amend that interpretation before publication.

Contact

We are happy to discuss the above feedback or provide further information if required. You can contact us by email at mtgloriouscommunityassociation@outlook.com.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours faithfully



Flight Path Working Group
Mount Glorious Community Association Inc.