

Standing Committee on State Development

Inquiry into the NSW Planning Framework

Held in Queanbeyan on 19th May 2009

The Village Building Co Limited

Answers to Questions on Notice

The Hon. Melinda Pavey : The representatives of Canberra Airport said that it [the ANEF] went over the whole of Canberra and Queanbeyan.

Mr Ineson: Yes, I heard them say that, and I was a bit puzzled by it. I have seen maps that show flights circling around. I will have to take that question on notice and respond to you.

Response: In a response to a question from the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, Mr Byron said, "If you were to go back to the ANEF plan that was there when we purchased the airport in 1998 – and it was done by the Federal Airports Corporation some 10 years before that – it reflected the flight paths going across Canberra and going across the whole of Queanbeyan. Indeed, the ANEF, and in particular the 20 ANEF, was right across the whole of Queanbeyan."

This statement and subsequent comments by Mr Byron are misleading. The map that I tabled (copy attached) at the Inquiry shows the prediction in various years for future air traffic under predominantly non-military operations. The map shows a dramatic growth in the area covered by the ANEF contours during the period of ownership by The Capital Airport Group in contrast to all other airports where the ANEF contours have not been growing rapidly. The map demonstrates the efforts of Canberra Airport to sterilise large tracts of land well in excess of more reasonable controls around other Australian airports. The ANEF mentioned by Mr Byron is irrelevant to this discussion because it reflected the Department of Defence's predictions for an airport operating with a high proportion of military operations. This never eventuated. In regards to the ANEF mentioned by Mr Byron, Dr Rob Bullen of Wilkinson Murray, a leading expert on aircraft noise says:

"From the table of aircraft operations sent today, I can say the following with respect to the 1997 ANEF contour shown in Canberra Airport's Master Plan.

The contour is a prediction for year 1997, and was produced in 1987. In 1987 the airport was a military facility – Fairbairn Air Base – and the ANEF was produced by the Department of Defence. The airport was in fact sold to Canberra International Airport Pty Ltd in 1998, and military use was scaled down in the lead-up to that sale, but this was not known in 1987 and the projection was for continued military use. Hence the 1987 projection is unlikely to reflect actual exposure in 1997.

The level and pattern of aircraft noise in the 1997 forecast would be dominated by "military" aircraft...

I conclude that the form of the 20 ANEF contour in the 1997 projection (as produced in 1987) bears no relationship to the likely form a contour either for current operations or for a civilian airport at ultimate

capacity. The main features are due to military operations, notably circuits, and these would not be repeated for a civilian airport under any conceivable operating conditions."

Mr Ineson: Yes. On the matter of the freight hub, that was proposed in the current preliminary draft master plan for the airport. We had Access Economics review that. It said the prospects of Canberra Airport becoming a freight hub are just not there. I would like to provide the Committee with a copy of that report.

The Hon. Christine Robertson: Yes, that would be useful, thank you.

Response: A copy of the Access Economics report dated 23 March 2009 is attached to this response. Pages 2, 6, 7 and 8 dispute the viability of a freight hub. Pages 10 to 18 criticise the High Noise Corridor concept being promoted by Canberra Airport. Access Economics is a highly respected expert in this area and has recently been used by Minister Albanese to review the Sydney Airport Master Plan prior to endorsement. A copy of an addendum report by Access Economics dated 28 April 2009 is also attached. The addendum report identifies another overestimation by Canberra Airport of future air traffic.

VBC has obtained further comments by expert aviation and acoustics consultants that are critical of the claims made by Canberra Airport in their Preliminary Draft Master Plan. These comments will be attached to a supplementary submission to be lodged shortly to this Inquiry in response to statements made by Canberra Airport to the Hearing held in Queanbeyan on 19th May 2009.