



Residents Against Western Sydney Airport Incorporated

Blaxland NSW
Email: info@rawsa.info

Update – 12 November 2016

Dear Members and Volunteers,

On Friday 11th November the Environment Minister, Josh Frydenberg MP, handed down some 40 environmental conditions in his consideration of the draft Airport Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This is a required step in the environmental and developmental approval for the proposed project under the *Airports Act 1996*.

The conditions will be included in the final Airport Plan and will bind any airport developer and operator to comply with them. Infrastructure Minister, Paul Fletcher, will now consider these conditions and is required to appropriately reflect them in the Airport Plan before he can make a final determination of the Airport Plan, which would authorise the Stage 1 Development of the proposed Western Sydney Airport.

The conditions handed down relate to airspace design regarding noise on residential areas, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and other sensitive locations; an environmental management framework for the construction and operation of the airport; a package of \$180 million in biodiversity offsets, a report to review the consideration of a fuel pipeline to commence by the end of 2017; and a \$10 million contribution to a native seed program run by Greening Australia for conservation replanting programs on Western Sydney's Cumberland Plain.

Once the Stage 1 is authorised the arm wrestle between the Federal Government and Sydney Airport begins but more on that later.

We have attached a copy of the Environment Minister's conditions to this update.

"Western_Sydney_Airport_Stage_1_Environmental_Conditions"

Many readers would know that were several major flaws and omissions in the EIS, however, it is disappointing to see that such deficiencies were either given little attention or completely ignored in the Environment Minister's consideration.

The Blue Mountains Mayor, Cr Mark Greenhill has condemned the Federal Government saying; "Astonishingly, the Minister for Environment and Energy has approved an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for an airport with unknown flight paths", said Mayor Greenhill. "How is this even possible? It is ridiculous in the extreme. The Blue Mountains and Western Sydney communities have no accurate information on the noise and other impacts of the flight paths. That is because there are no flight paths."

And the Mayor is absolutely correct in that the fundamental examination of the EIS cannot be credible because of the lack of flight path information. You can see more information about the Blue Mountains position on the proposed airport at this website; <http://www.clearbluesky.info/>

Below are some prime examples of the EIS deficiencies we are concerned with;

- **Air Quality not been taken seriously.** Air pollutants at Stage 1 were *"determined (by the EIS) to be at the upper bound or marginally above levels considered to be acceptable by national and international regulatory agencies"*. So if air quality is at or above acceptable standards at Stage 1 when the airport will be 10 million passengers per year then it has to be worse at Stage 2 when the airport is planned to be 8 time larger at 82 million passengers per year yet there is no such review.

- **Bird and Bat Strike Risk to Planes** (have you seen the true story movie “Sully”?). The EIS bat and birdlife survey was carried out over a few days without night-time records and without considering seasonal variations which is well below normal standards for a project of this size and consequence. For example, birds known to the area were not identified such as Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, Galahs and Long Billed Corellas, Kites, Eagles and Ibis. And Kites are responsible for the largest number of aircraft strikes in Australia.
- In May 2016 via a press release the Infrastructure Minister, Paul Fletcher, said that “...The Turnbull Government has listened to community views on flight paths...allocating the flight paths to minimise the individual impact on any one point will form part of a comprehensive noise mitigation plan to be contained in the final EIS.” **Contrary to this promise there is not a comprehensive noise mitigation plan contained in the final EIS and there are no flight paths.**
- **Lack of consideration of alternate infrastructure such as High Speed Rail** that has the potential to place an eventual second airport outside of the Sydney basin. Such an option should be at least form part of the EIS consideration for a major project as a second airport.
- **The impact upon the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area has been ignored.**
- **Challenges to the grossly exaggerated EIS jobs figures were ignored** as was the fact that the EIS did not make a count of the loss of employment in the agricultural sector and related industries or the social and economic impact of the dislocation of that sector such as the substantial market gardens that today provide daily fresh produce to local and Sydney Markets.
- **The economic viability and the potential impact on the Australian taxpayer has not been addressed** despite being alerted to a study by Deutsche Bank in 2015 that concluded that the WSA may require \$1billion in subsidies in order to make it viable during its first decade (www.smh.com.au, 2015).
- Plenty of studies and reports **but no actual funding to construct integrated public transport** infrastructure including rail to support the airport and reduce impacts on already congested roads.
- **The EIS does not incorporate climate projections for the Sydney Basin in its methodology and conclusions** despite the fact that much of the science is readily available in peer reviewed publications, as well as on the NSW government's website (2), and despite being provided with this information in the form of a submission to the draft EIS. In doing that the EIS fails to answer the question of how sustainable would life be in the West at the time that the airport will operate. The response to relevant submissions to the draft EIS were answered in the final EIS with: "The effects of climate change on local meteorology are unable to be accounted for in the current atmospheric dispersion modelling given the inherent uncertainties involved". This statement is questionable given that data to support such a simulation is available on the NSW government website and the fact that such simulations are being done on a regular basis in Australia and around the world.
- **The EIS failed to consider the full spectrum of negative health and psychological impacts of noise from airport operations and over flight and the associated costs to the healthcare system.** There is a lack of acknowledgement and consideration for minimising noise impacts upon children who are particularly vulnerable to noise impacts. And the ANEC/ANEF noise assessment methodology and maps do not indicate the true impact of noise pollution. This methodology is some 40 years old and many in the aviation industry consider it to be completely inappropriate for modern airport planning.
- **Inadequate assessment of risks to critical infrastructure** within the operational area of the proposed airport from aircraft accidents or even deliberate acts of terrorism or pilot suicide.
- **A lack of consideration of the impacts on Aboriginal and European heritage** other than to produce a management plan which would be at the discretion of the Infrastructure Minister to approve.

- **The Cumberland Plains Woodland is endangered and 148 hectares of it will be lost to the airport site clearing which also provides habitat to critically endangered species such as the Swift Parrot and Cumberland Land Snail.** Clearing the airport site vegetation such as Cumberland Plains Woodland will knowingly destroy habitat of the critically endangered Swift Parrot of which only 2,000 still exist. These are migratory birds that nest in Tasmania, and feed at other times in Victoria and NSW. Given the low numbers of birds left, to have observed them feeding at the airport site (recorded in EIS) is very significant. Clearing the Cumberland Plains Woodland will also cause the destruction of known populations of the critically endangered Cumberland Land Snail that feeds on fungus that grows on Cumberland Plains Woodland leaf litter, so relocation to new habitats is unlikely to be successful. (NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage 2016). There are simply insufficient remaining areas of Cumberland Plains Woodland for so called "offsets" to be a possible strategy. Experimental evidence indicates that replanting does not work to replace Cumberland Plains Woodland. So it would seem that the \$10 million contribution to a native seed program run by Greening Australia for replanting programs of the Cumberland Plains Woodland is nothing more than a token gesture to create the appearance of conservation rather than actual conservation which would be better achieved by avoiding its destruction in the first place.

What does all this mean? It is hard not to get take the inference that the Federal Government cares not one bit about properly assessing the environmental impacts and is on a mission to clear the hurdles required for approval of the proposed Stage 1 development of the airport. Be that as it may, they are still a long way from building an airport. In fact, it is not they, but Sydney Airports Corporation (SAC) that the Federal Government want to take on the cost and responsibility to build the proposed airport under a "Notice of Intention" (NOI) they will issue to them either later this year or earlier next year. The NOI will be a comprehensive and voluminous contract with significant terms and conditions that SAC will obviously need to scrutinise carefully.

SAC will then have either 4 or 9 months to respond depending on how familiar they are with the proposal. It is likely that the Federal Government will claim that 4 months applies and SAC will claim the later. Whichever it is we can be certain that there will be a lot of arm wrestling over funding the massive cost which could easily exceed \$10 billion. The Federal Government can contribute anything from 0% to 100% of the funding (known as concessions) and this will likely be a drawn out and tense negotiation. It is hard to imagine that the cash strapped Federal Government would want to concede much funding and similarly SAC will be negotiating hard to protect their shareholders interests. We will closely monitor this process and keep you informed of progress and of what strategies will be considering in an endeavour to influence the outcome.

Other News

In other news we continue to lobby politicians and attend relevant meetings and forums. You would have received the recent report on our meeting with Sydney Airport Corporation held on the 4th November. Recently we met with the Federal Members of Macarthur, Mike Freeland, and Werriwa, Anne Stanley, and to promote our RAWSA objectives and provide a research information into the WSA proposal.

We also met with Anthony Albanese the Shadow Infrastructure Minister where we sought to find common ground of 2 points of view which is (1) The inequity of no curfew operations for WSA versus legislated curfew for Sydney and (2) the deficiencies of the EIS. No common ground was found on either. To cut a long story short Mr Albanese dismissed all of our concerns and seems totally wedded to the proposal despite a growing number of Labor MPs in the west that are raising serious and legitimate concerns about the airport proposal and the flawed EIS that supports it.

The Greater Sydney Commission is holding a community drop in session in Penrith on **1st December 6pm to 9pm at Penrith City Council Library Theatre**. They will have an major planning and influencing role with respect to the propose airport so it would be great to get as many RAWSA people there are possible to see what they have to say about future planning for the west.

The next Blue Mountains Mayoral WSA Reference Group meets on Thursday 15th December where we expect to discuss, amongst other things, ideas for a public show of opposition to the proposed WSA airport. We will keep you informed on this event as we get further updates.

And what can you do? Keep up the emails to your local MPs as it does make an impact, contact details are provide below. And keep the issue alive by writing to your local newspapers.

Come along to public meetings and events that we will advertise on both Facebook and emails. Talk to friends, neighbours and family and keep our opposition alive on this unnecessary and massively costly piece of infrastructure.

Thanks for reading.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Dollin
President
Residents Against Western Sydney Airport
RAWSA

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Josh Frydenberg, Environment Minister, josh.frydenberg.mp@aph.gov.au

Doug Cameron, Senator for NSW, senator.cameron@aph.gov.au

Tony Burke, Shadow Environment Minister, tony.burke.mp@aph.gov.au

Anthony Albanese, Shadow Infrastructure Minister, a.albanese.mp@aph.gov.au

Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister, www.pm.gov.au/contact/your-pm

Bill Shorten, Leader of the Opposition, bill.shorten.mp@aph.gov.au

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