



The Hon John Anderson MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services
Leader National Party of Australia

Dr Brendan Nelson MP
Chair
Sydney Airport Community Forum
PO Box A301
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1235

Dear Dr Nelson

Thank you for your letter of 20 July 2000 conveying the resolutions and key issues arising from the 26th meeting of the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF) held on 7 July 2000.

I note the Forum's view on the Precision Runway Monitor (PRM) Trial. Having regard to the McMichael Report, I consider that the Trial is an important activity in completing a thorough assessment of the PRM proposal. As you know, the purpose of the Trial is twofold: first to ascertain changes in levels of aircraft noise that residents in Sydney might experience as a result of the introduction of a PRM system for approaches to the Airport from the north; and second, to assess as far as practicable, the impacts of those changes.

I agree that the value of the Trial is dependent on robust methodology and independent monitoring and evaluation. In that regard, it is important to note that the Trial is being conducted under the auspices of Environment Australia. Independent consultants have been engaged by Environment Australia to conduct the noise-monitoring program and will carry out the analysis and reporting under the general direction of Environment Australia.

I am assured that sufficient noise measurements will be taken under both PRM and present instrument operations to provide a 'base case' against which PRM operations can be compared. The current trial will allow the monitoring of PRM operations during periods of normal air traffic and during periods when air traffic will be above present levels (ie the Olympic Games period). I am advised there is sufficient flexibility in the trial methodology for those noise measurements that are necessary to establish the 'base case' to be completed after the PRM stage of the trial is finished. I should emphasise that the Government will make no decision on any permanent use of a PRM system until the trial is completed and environmental impacts are fully evaluated.

I note the Forum's frustration on the public's access to the Noise Enquiry Unit (NEU), in particular during PRM operations. As you know, I have made it clear to

Airservices Australia that they need to give community relations a high priority. The NEU is an important interface with the community and my Department is closely monitoring its effectiveness in conjunction with Airservices Australia.

Eligibility for residential insulation under the Sydney Aircraft Noise Amelioration Program is based upon aircraft noise exposure as calculated under the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) system. Residential properties within the 30 noise exposure contour are eligible for insulation under the program. As you know, the calculation of contours takes into account the numbers and type of aircraft, their flight paths and noise characteristics, and the time of day of their operation. I am advised no areas of Kurnell are within the 30 contour. Indeed, only a very small area of the Kurnell Peninsula is within the 25 contour.

It is unfortunate that wherever boundaries are drawn there will be residential properties outside of the set boundaries with some aircraft noise exposure that will not be eligible for insulation assistance. While I understand the concerns expressed, properties in Kurnell are treated no differently to any other property located just outside the insulation boundaries. It would be inequitable to other similarly placed residents to make an exception in this instance.

In regard to SACF's request for the appointment of a permanent community proxy to the Implementation and Monitoring Committee (IMC), I observe that the Committee has now rescheduled its meetings to a 6.00pm timeslot to accommodate community representatives. This should facilitate community participation. However, given the need to maintain continuity and for the Committee to work effectively, I do not consider it appropriate for proxies of community or industry members to attend meetings. Inability to attend meetings is best addressed with the Chair of the IMC in determining suitable meeting times.

I view very seriously any safety concerns raised by airline pilot organisations about procedures at Australian airports. I have therefore asked the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to investigate the specific issues raised by the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association in regard to crosswind runway usage at Sydney Airport, as a matter of priority. The investigation is being undertaken in conjunction with the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and Airservices Australia.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Minister Anderson
14 August 2000

JOHN ANDERSON