



Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald

Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government

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24 January 2001

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

Dear Dr Nelson

Thank you for your letters of 18 October and 20 November 2000 to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson MP, concerning the resolutions and the key issues raised at the 27th and 28th meetings of the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF).

I have noted your advice concerning the views of SACF members regarding the proposal by Ansett and Qantas to evaluate the use of 'power off' Standard Terminal Arrival Route (STAR) approaches during the trial of Precision Runway Monitor (PRM) operations at Sydney Airport. In particular I acknowledge that there is a divergence of views within the Forum.

Given the fears that have been expressed about the potential concentration of flight paths using the STAR, and recognising that amending the existing trial methodology at this relatively late stage may add further complexity to the trial process, I have formed the view that the STAR evaluation should not proceed as a part of the PRM Trial. I believe, therefore, that the best approach would be to defer an evaluation of the STAR until after Environment Australia has completed the PRM trial so that the two issues can be treated separately. I have written to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator the Hon Robert Hill, advising my view.

Nonetheless, there is merit in exploring the potential for introducing 'power off' approaches at Sydney Airport. Indeed this is one of the remaining elements of the Sydney Airport Long Term Operating Plan (LTOP) that has yet to be implemented. I therefore envisage that the airlines, Airservices Australia and Environment Australia will, in consultation with SACF, examine ways in which these approaches can be integrated into the operations of the Airport without compromising the noise sharing principles of LTOP.

I have also written to the airlines indicating my views on the STAR issue.

I note that the Forum has considered a paper by the Mayor of Randwick, Cr Dominic Sullivan, regarding the proposed development of Mode 6A. In light of SACF views, I agree with you that further investigations be undertaken, conditional on Airservices Australia undertaking an environment assessment in accordance with the Commonwealth's legislative framework.

In regard to the Forum's concerns about the regularity of actual runway movements exceeding 80 movements per hour at Sydney Airport, I reiterate that while the Sydney Airport Slot Management Scheme, established under the *Sydney Airport Demand Management Act 1997* ('the Act'), limits the number of allocated slots, owing to practical operational and safety requirements, the number of actual runway movements may on some occasions exceed 80 an hour.

My Department will be pursuing the question of the inclusion of information about the insulation of houses on Section 149 certificates with the appropriate State and Local government agencies. The Department is reviewing whether the current administrative procedures which are designed to verify the status of boarding houses are adequate.

I am concerned about the possibility of residential development taking place in the vicinity of the Kurnell Sandhills. Clearly this is a key flight path corridor for the Airport and the construction of noise sensitive buildings in this area could compromise the operations of the Airport. My Department is now taking this up with the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and I envisage that my officers will keep the Forum informed of key developments taking place in the planning review process.

The Forum's concerns about not using proxies for meetings of the Implementation and Monitoring Committee (IMC) are recognised. Naturally I would not wish to see the community's participation in the work of the IMC constrained and I similarly recognise that industry representation at meetings is vital if the Committee is to perform its functions. Nevertheless I believe it is important that there is continuity of members at IMC meetings and therefore I suggest that the use of proxies only be used when absolutely necessary. If this situation occurs members should submit a formal request to use a proxy to the IMC Chairman as far in advance of the meeting as practical.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Acting Minister 24 January 2001
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Ian Macdonald
Acting Minister for Transport and Regional Services