



Senator the Hon. Ian Macdonald

Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government

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24 January 2001

Mr David Forsyth
Executive General Manager
Aircraft Operations
Qantas Airways Limited
203 Coward Street
MASCOT NSW 2020

Dear Mr Forsyth

I refer to Minister Anderson's letter of 27 September 2000 where he advised that he was reviewing his position on your and Ansett's proposal to evaluate a Standard Terminal Arrival Route (STAR) as a part of the current Precision Runway Monitor (PRM) Trial at Sydney Airport. In particular, he indicated his desire for the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF) to be briefed on the matter by the airlines before a decision is made. This has now occurred and the Chairman of SACF, Dr Brendan Nelson MP, has responded conveying SACF's position on this matter.

The Government appreciates the efforts of Qantas and Ansett in proposing flight management procedures that may have beneficial environmental outcomes in terms of noise respite for some residents and fuel burn savings for airlines. However, on balance, my view is not to support an evaluation of the STAR proposal as part of the PRM Trial. Public concerns have emerged on the concentration of flight paths and that amending the existing trial methodology at this relatively late stage would add further complexity to the process. Clearly, public confidence in the purpose and integrity of the environmental assessment process for the PRM Trial is important, and I am not prepared to prejudice this.

In this light, I believe 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.

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 Dr Nelson and Captain Trevor Jensen of Ansett, conveying my views.

Yours sincerely

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