

22 May 2018

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Air Services Amendment Bill 2018

I wish to make a submission in support of the above Bill. The Bill provides important protection for communities affected by aircraft, which is not available under existing legislation.

As a long-term resident of East Melbourne I have noticed over recent years a marked increase in the amount of aircraft flying over the area. This, I am told, is because of:

1. Smart Tracking. The implementation of this new technology has concentrated flight paths into narrow bands. This has accentuated noise in particular areas to the detriment of the communities living below.
2. Relaxation of the requirement to lodge flight plans in and out of Moorabbin and Essendon airports. This has resulted in a massive increase in light aircraft and helicopters flying over East Melbourne and the inner Melbourne area.

The flights are undertaken for various reasons: sightseeing, recreational, student pilot, event coverage, advertising, balloon, traffic reporting and Yarra helicopter taxis – mostly non-essential. Some aircraft circle multiple times, simply sightseeing, or sometimes dragging advertising banners you can't read. And why do we need traffic reporting? If you are driving home you are not watching the television; and if you are watching television do you really care if there are roadworks on Road A, B or C? Helicopters hovering over the MCG for an hour at a time are the worst of the lot.

The most obvious result of these changes is increased noise, but far more important, surely, is the security issue. If we are banning cars from the MCG on big match days is it not inconsistent that we allow aircraft unrestricted access to the airspace overhead?

Finally there is the added risk of accident. There has been one helicopter accident near the MCG not so long ago, next time it could be over a built up area, and not parkland.

These changes should never have been implemented without consultation with the communities most affected and now is the time to see them redressed.

Yours faithfully,

Sylvia Black