Question on notice no. 112

Portfolio question number: 112

2020-21 Additional estimates

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Portfolio

Senator Larissa Waters: asked the Airservices Australia on 6 April 2021—

(1. Who provides regulatory oversight to ensure that airport operations conform to the Australian Noise Exposure Forecasts (ANEF) required as part of airport master plans and Major Development Plans (MDP) ? 2. What happens when airport operations do not conform to their Australian Noise Exposure Forecasts (ANEF) as part of their airport master plans and Major Development Plans (MDP) ? 3. Airservices considers a number of assumptions and inputs when conducting technical endorsements of ANEFs as stipulated in the 'manner of endorsement' document approved by the former Minister of Infrastructure and Transport in April 2017. As part of its technical endorsement of Brisbane Airport's ANEF, can you confirm: That the appropriate selection of aircraft types for the airport have been used as input data? That the runway usage and flight path data used as an input to the model are 'operationally suitable for the airport'? That the forecast numbers of aircraft movements, operating times and the aircraft types carrying out operations are not greater than the physical ultimate capacity of the existing or proposed runway/s, using accepted and published methodologies? That the contours have been modelled correctly? That the proponent has demonstrated they have paid 'due regard' to all issues raised by state and local government authorities in relation to the ANEF? 4. Did Airservices consider any other relevant matters when you decided to endorse and approve Brisbane Airport's ANEF? 5. Considering Airservices provided technical endorsement and approval of Brisbane Airport's ANEF, how do you explain the significant discrepancy between the noise exposure levels forecast by Brisbane Airport's ANEF and the reality and lived experience of Brisbane residents as documented by both

(i) Airservices' own Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS) and

(ii) the large volume of complaints received by Airservices' Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) and the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO) ? 6. Submission #44 by Dr Eric Ancich has been tabled to the Senate Finance & Public Administration References Committee relating to the Planning, Construction & Management of the Western Sydney Airport project. The submission reads: In March 2019, the report "9173.R1 - "Assessment Of Measured Aircraft Noise Levels Under The Existing Flight Paths of Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport With Reference To Western Sydney Airport" (prepared by Dr Eric Ancich and Mr Donald Carter) was submitted to Blacktown City Council. The report subsequently attracted media interest (both electronic and print) and is now widely known as the Ancich Report. [...] The Ancich Report suggested that the noise level predictions for Western Sydney Airport underestimated the true impact. [...] The conclusion of the study was that

measurement of noise generated by aircraft in flight had demonstrated that variability in the height of aircraft will result in a wide range of receiver noise levels. This variability in height and the commensurate variability in noise levels would increase the noise impact over Blacktown and the Lower Blue Mountains, by 3 and 4 times respectively in perceived loudness, compared to that predicted in the EIS due to assumptions built into the modelling. The flawed ANEF for Western Sydney Airport that is now subject to a Senate Inquiry was developed by Wilkinson Murray - the same acoustical consultants that previously also developed the ANEF for Brisbane Airport. Do you agree that the significant discrepancy between the noise exposure levels forecast by Brisbane Airport's ANEF, which Airservices endorsed and approved, and the reality and lived experience of Brisbane residents, can be explained by the same flaws as identified in the Ancich Report? 7. Was financial compensation for noise affected residents under the new runway flight paths in Brisbane considered, and will the matter of compensation be revisited now that the ANEF and aircraft noise modelling have been shown to be highly inaccurate and flawed? 8. On 24 February 2021, at the Technical Airspace Design Workshop Brisbane Airport Corporation stated that the decision for mixed parallel simultaneous operations at Brisbane Airport "was ultimately a decision by BAC." Why was this BAC's decision rather than Airservices' or CASA's as the government regulators, especially given the runway operating mode can determine much of the airspace design? Are private, commercial airport operators normally responsible for deciding their runway operating modes? 9. Did the community have the same access to influence flight path design decisions as BAC? 10. Can you describe the commercial and regulatory relationships between Airservices and BAC? Does Airservices view BAC as its client and customer? 11. Why was it considered necessary to operate at ultimate capacity mode (i.e. mixed parallel simultaneous operations) from day 1 at Brisbane Airport, and was any consideration given to a progressive capacity increase over time using alternative operating modes with better noise abatement outcomes?

Answer —

Answer attached.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 2020 - 2021

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

Committee Question Number: 112
Departmental Question Number: SQ21-000152

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Airservices Australia
Topic: Australian Noise Exposure Forecasts
Proof Hansard Page: Written (6 April 2021)

Senator Larissa Waters asked:

1. Who provides regulatory oversight to ensure that airport operations conform to the Australian Noise Exposure Forecasts (ANEF) required as part of airport master plans and Major Development Plans (MDP)?
2. What happens when airport operations do not conform to their Australian Noise Exposure Forecasts (ANEF) as part of their airport master plans and Major Development Plans (MDP)?
3. Airservices considers a number of assumptions and inputs when conducting technical endorsements of ANEFs as stipulated in the 'manner of endorsement' document approved by the former Minister of Infrastructure and Transport in April 2017. As part of its technical endorsement of Brisbane Airport's ANEF, can you confirm:
    - That the appropriate selection of aircraft types for the airport have been used as input data?
    - That the runway usage and flight path data used as an input to the model are 'operationally suitable for the airport'?
    - That the forecast numbers of aircraft movements, operating times and the aircraft types carrying out operations are not greater than the physical ultimate capacity of the existing or proposed runway/s, using accepted and published methodologies?
    - That the contours have been modelled correctly?
    - That the proponent has demonstrated they have paid 'due regard' to all issues raised by state and local government authorities in relation to the ANEF?
4. Did Airservices consider any other relevant matters when you decided to endorse and approve Brisbane Airport's ANEF?
5. Considering Airservices provided technical endorsement and approval of Brisbane Airport's ANEF, how do you explain the significant discrepancy between the noise exposure levels forecast by Brisbane Airport's ANEF and the reality and lived experience of Brisbane residents as documented by both (i) Airservices' own Noise and Flight Path Monitoring System (NFPMS) and (ii) the large volume of complaints received by Airservices' Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) and the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman (ANO)?
6. Submission #44 by Dr Eric Ancich has been tabled to the Senate Finance & Public Administration References Committee relating to the Planning, Construction & Management of the Western Sydney Airport project. The submission reads:
   In March 2019, the report "9173.R1 – "Assessment Of Measured Aircraft Noise Levels Under The Existing Flight Paths of Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport With Reference To Western Sydney Airport" (prepared by Dr Eric Ancich and Mr Donald Carter) was submitted to Blacktown City Council. The report subsequently attracted media interest (both electronic and print) and is now widely known as the Ancich Report. […] The Ancich Report suggested that the noise level predictions for Western Sydney Airport underestimated the true impact. […] The conclusion of the study was that measurement of noise generated by aircraft in flight had demonstrated that variability in the height of aircraft will result in a wide range of receiver noise levels. This variability in height and the commensurate variability in noise levels would increase the noise impact over Blacktown and the Lower Blue

Mountains, by 3 and 4 times respectively in perceived loudness, compared to that predicted in the EIS due to assumptions built into the modelling.
The flawed ANEF for Western Sydney Airport that is now subject to a Senate Inquiry was developed by Wilkinson Murray – the same acoustical consultants that previously also developed the ANEF for Brisbane Airport. Do you agree that the significant discrepancy between the noise exposure levels forecast by Brisbane Airport's ANEF, which Airservices endorsed and approved, and the reality and lived experience of Brisbane residents, can be explained by the same flaws as identified in the Ancich Report?

7. Was financial compensation for noise affected residents under the new runway flight paths in Brisbane considered, and will the matter of compensation be revisited now that the ANEF and aircraft noise modelling have been shown to be highly inaccurate and flawed?
8. On 24 February 2021, at the Technical Airspace Design Workshop Brisbane Airport Corporation stated that the decision for mixed parallel simultaneous operations at Brisbane Airport "was ultimately a decision by BAC." Why was this BAC's decision rather than Airservices' or CASA's as the government regulators, especially given the runway operating mode can determine much of the airspace design? Are private, commercial airport operators normally responsible for deciding their runway operating modes?
9. Did the community have the same access to influence flight path design decisions as BAC?
10. Can you describe the commercial and regulatory relationships between Airservices and BAC? Does Airservices view BAC as its client and customer?
11. Why was it considered necessary to operate at ultimate capacity mode (i.e. mixed parallel simultaneous operations) from day 1 at Brisbane Airport, and was any consideration given to a progressive capacity increase over time using alternative operating modes with better noise abatement outcomes?

Answer:

1. The regulatory requirement for Australian Noise Exposure Forecasts (ANEFs) is set out in the *Airports Act 1996* (the Airports Act) which is administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.
2. The ANEF depicts future noise exposure and is built from assumptions around future operational levels usually 20 or more years in the future. To ensure that assumptions remain relevant, ANEFs are updated every 5 years for federally leased airports with the Australian Noise Exposure Index (ANEI) used as a baseline which measures actual noise exposure on a calendar year basis.
3. Airservices Australia endorsed Brisbane Airport's ANEF (Brisbane Airport Ultimate Practical Capacity ANEF) on 8 May 2019 in accordance with the 'manner of endorsement' document approved by the former Minister of Infrastructure and Transport.
4. No.
5. The ANEF is a land use planning tool derived from future predicted operational levels. There will always be a difference between the theoretical modelling and measured results.
6. The current ANEF for Brisbane Airport was developed by AirBiz utilising the Federal Aviation Administration Integrated Noise Model Tool, which is used by an extensive number of countries around the world to model noise impacts, and endorsed on 8 May 2019. There will always be discrepancies between forecast and actual noise exposure levels.
7. Financial compensation for community under flight paths is not part of Airservices Australia's remit or legislated responsibility.
8. Private commercial airport operators are responsible for the design of their on-ground infrastructure. Brisbane Airport Corporation made the decision to provide a distance of 2000 metres between the two runway centrelines to enable independent operation modes to be developed by Airservices.

Airservices Australia designs the flight paths,develops procedures and modes of operation based on the orientation and location of the runways. Air traffic control determines which mode is applied based on traffic volumes, weather and other conditions, with safety as the highest priority.

9. Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) determined the location and orientation of their runways through their Master Planning and Major Development Plan (MDP) process. BAC's community engagement during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) consultation for their Master Plan and MDP provided an opportunity for the community to influence flight path decisions. Public consultation involved a two-year information campaign and a formal 90-day consultation period required as part of the MDP and EIS process.

10. Airservices Australia is a service provider not a regulator. Federally leased airports are regulated by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communicaitons. Airservices Australia is regulated by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

    Airservices Australia works with airports to deliver services to the aviation industry and travelling public, including air traffic control and aviation rescue fire fighting. Our services and supporting infrastructure are funded through customer charges to major domestic, international and regional airlines, charter operators, flight training schools and general aviation operators.

11. Brisbane Airport is operating using parallel runway operating modes. It is however, not operating at full capacity due to low demand.

    Full parallel runway operations will commence at Brisbane Airport as demand increases. This will be managed with safety as the highest priority, with mode selection and Noise Abatement Procedures applied as appropriate to minimise the impact of aircraft operations on the community as far as practicable.