

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: AAA 01

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Brisbane Airport Movements between 11pm and 6am

Hansard Page/s: 55 (27/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Can you tell me what percentage of flights arrive and depart at Brisbane airport between, say, 11 pm and 6 am?

Mr Mrdak—We would have to take that on notice. We do not have that material. We can provide that information.

Answer:

For the 2009 calendar year Brisbane airport had 6.78% of total arrivals and 8.26% of total departures occur during the hours of 11pm and 6am.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: AAA 02

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Brisbane Airport Curfew

Hansard Page/s: 55-56 (27/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Are you aware that the Queensland Premier condemned the suggestion that Brisbane airport should have a curfew?

Mr Mrdak—We are aware that the Queensland Premier made comments concerning the announcement in the aviation white paper.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Do you know if the minister shares the view of the Queensland Premier?

Senator Conroy—I am sure that if you want to know the minister's views you can ask for the minister's views, but soliciting opinion from officers is not part of the estimates process.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Unfortunately, the minister does not appear before this committee and I do not meet him often socially, although as it turns out—

Senator Conroy—If you named an airport after him, he might.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I was just going to say—

Senator Conroy—I am waiting for those photos. Time is running out, Senator Macdonald.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—As it so happens, as I left this room just after lunch was called I actually did run into the minister. Do you know what we spoke about? Not curfews in Brisbane, but the Stephen Conroy memorial airstrip at Karumba. Is that not coincidental?

Senator Conroy—You are a legend. That is on the *Hansard*. Macca is a legend, out there campaigning for me.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—But, apart from that conversation, I do not have a lot of conversations with the minister. So, Minister Conroy, I am now asking you if you could ascertain if Minister Albanese shares—

Senator Conroy—I am happy to ascertain his views and take those on notice for you.

Answer:

Page 214 of the National Aviation Policy White Paper, released in December 2009, indicates that the Government has committed to a formal review of the need for a curfew at Brisbane airport to inform the Government's consideration on the next Brisbane Airport Master Plan in 2014.

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: AAA 03

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Melbourne Airport Curfew

Hansard Page/s: 57 (27/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Minister, as a Victorian, in spite of your close association with the gulf country of North Queensland and airports, could you assure the people of Australia and this committee that the government would not, under any circumstances, allow a curfew on the Melbourne airport?

Senator Conroy—I would have to take that on notice and seek the minister's response. I am not aware of any statements made by the minister on that. The officers are shaking their heads. I am happy to seek a response from the minister and take that on notice.

Answer:

Page 214 of the National Aviation Policy White Paper, released in December 2009, confirms that the Government is conscious of the value of a network of curfew-free airports and has no current intention to introduce additional airport curfews.

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Question No.: AAA 04

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Proximity of residences to Melbourne and Brisbane Airports

Hansard Page/s: 58 (27/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. I shall do that. Thank you. Are you able to confirm that the closest home to Melbourne airport is four kilometres away and that the closest home to the Brisbane airport is a distance of seven kilometres away? Are you aware of that statistic?

Mr Doherty—Away from?

Senator IAN MACDONALD—From the airport—taken in a seven kilometre semicircle.

Mr Mrdak—I have seen similar figures, I think, in relation to Brisbane airport—the distance from the centre line along certain runway alignments—but I am not familiar with that comparison between Melbourne and Brisbane. But I have seen similar figures in the past in relation to, say, the centre line of the Brisbane runway to the suburb adjacent.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could you see on notice if you could find out for me if it is around.

Answer:

According to Figure 11.3 in Chapter 11 of the Brisbane Airport Master Plan, the closest residence from the end of the runway (in a straight line) is 6.7km at Brisbane Airport and 3.5km at Melbourne Airport.

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Question No.: AAA 05

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: 34 Squadron Landing at Brisbane Airport Between 11pm and 6am

Hansard Page/s: 59 (27/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Would I ask you—or perhaps I would have to go to the Air Force to ask for this—how many times the Prime Minister’s VIP plane lands at Brisbane airport between 11 pm and 6 am? Would you have those figures?

Mr Doherty—At Brisbane airport, where there is not a curfew?

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Yes.

Mr Doherty—We do not have those figures but we can find that out.

Answer:

See answer to AA 05.

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Question No.: AAA 06

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Sydney Airport MP Air Pollution

Hansard Page/s: 62 (27/05/10)

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM—You may look at it. The master plan expresses air pollution in a different format to the previous master plan in the third runway EIS. I am not a specialist in this area particularly. Can you talk us through the difference in methodology that has been used to assess urban air pollution in the area? What was the reasoning for the change in methodology between one plan and the next?

Mr Doherty—That is not an issue that anyone at the table could deal with, from memory.

Senator LUDLAM—Is that a fair characterisation of the situation?

Mr Doherty—I do not know.

Mr Mrdak—We will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Sydney Airport Corporation Limited's (SACL) approach to air quality and emissions is set out in the Sydney Airport 2004 Master Plan (page 127) and the Sydney Airport 2009 Master Plan (page 157) respectively. SACL's reasoning for the change in predicted emissions between the two Master Plans is explained on page 157-158 of the 2009 Master Plan.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: AAA 07

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Sydney Airport MP Air Pollution

Hansard Page/s: 62-63 (27/05/10)

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM—Firstly, why was the airport not required to use a consistent format between the two master plans? I would have thought that would have been a fairly reasonable expectation so that we could draw a correct comparison between the current one and the most recent one. Can you provide for us a way of interpreting the changed methodology between the two studies? That would be appreciated. Can you table all material that relates to air pollution within the current master plan? Are there any supporting documents that would help us make an assessment about how that has been considered?

Mr Wilson—We will certainly take those on notice.

Senator LUDLAM—There was a health study of Kurnell residents by Black et al in 2007 which showed elevated blood pressure among residents of that region. There are obviously people living a lot closer to the footprint of the airport—in Marrickville, Mascot, Rockdale, the surrounding suburbs and so on. There is medical evidence on the table obviously that the existing level of air traffic is affecting people's health. What work are you doing within the scope of the current master plan or within the estimates of future traffic into and out of that airport about direct health impacts on residents in close proximity to the airport?

Mr Wilson—I certainly am not aware of the health study by Black in regard to Kurnell. I am not certain any of the officers at the table are aware of the report. We can have a look at the report and provide the committee with some advice on that.

Answer:

Air quality or emissions reporting is not a technical content requirement of a Master Plan (MP) under the *Airports Act 1996*.

Air pollutants at the airport site are addressed on page 157 of the Sydney Airport 2009 MP which is available at:

<<http://www.sydneyairport.com.au/SACL/DownloadDocument.ashx?DocumentID=763>>.

Supporting documentation as listed in the Sydney Airport 2009 MP Bibliography is held by Sydney Airport Corporation Limited.

The Government recognises the adverse impacts of aircraft noise and the need to manage these impacts. Chapter 14 of the National Aviation Policy White Paper contains a range of initiatives aimed at minimising the impact of aircraft noise on communities. In Sydney these measures include maintaining the Sydney Airport curfew, the existing hourly cap on aircraft movements and the noise-sharing initiative through the Long Term Operating Plan.

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Question No.: AAA 08

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: White Paper background to establishing an Aviation Ombudsman

Hansard Page/s: 72 (27/05/10)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Is it possible to provide for the committee—and this would certainly be on notice and may not even be possible—the other options you were talking about that were considered in terms of how the ombudsman would be set up? Could you provide those to the committee—the alternative strategies that might have been considered?

Mr Mrdak—Some of this was part of the government's policy development, including the cabinet consideration of the aviation white paper. I am happy to take on notice what we can provide.

Answer:

Page 209 of the Aviation White Paper, released in December 2009, outlines the Government's approach to the establishment of an Aircraft Noise Ombudsman.

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Question No.: AAA 09

Division/Agency: Aviation and Airports

Topic: Military Aviation Cost Recovery

Hansard Page/s: 74 (27/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Do you mean to tell me that in this modern day and age of government accounting you just say, ‘Oh well, look, it is about even, so we’ll write it off,’ rather than actually saying, ‘You would have owed us so much and you would have owed us so much and for our purposes we would have been in credit, but because of’—

Mr Mrdak—There is an awful lot of complex work that has gone into this. I will get some details for you on how it works, if you like, but it is complex to unpick and provide a direct price.

Answer:

The current position relating to aviation cost recovery and military aircraft operations is a longstanding arrangement.

The *Air Navigation Act 1920* provides the legal basis for cost recovery in respect of air navigation services, and excludes state aircraft (including military aircraft) from the operation of the Act for most purposes. This approach is consistent with international practice where state aircraft are generally excluded from the air navigation charging regime.

The provisions of the *Air Navigation Act 1920* are consistent with the *Defence Act 1903*, which excludes Defence from costs related to its use of the national transportation infrastructure. Notwithstanding this position, Defence does reimburse civil airport operators for fair wear and tear to aerodrome surfaces when military aircraft use those airfields.

As well as using civil aviation facilities and services, Defence is also an important provider of a number of services and facilities utilised by civil aviation at no cost, including the operation of air traffic services at Darwin, Townsville and Williamtown.

Consistent with the Government’s Aviation White Paper, Defence, assisted by other Government agencies, is assessing the financial implications of national air traffic management (ATM) solutions arising from implementation of a more harmonised civil-military approach to Australia’s ATM system. This assessment includes developing options relating to industry cost recovery and the possible introduction of inter-agency cross charging for consideration by the Government later this year.