



Office of the Hon Catherine King MP

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
Member for Ballarat

Ref: MC22-007450

Mr Mark Carter
contact@no3rdtullarunway.net.au

Dear Mr Carter,

Thank you for your letter of 18 August 2022 to the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, regarding the proposed Melbourne Airport north-south third runway (M3R). The Minister has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The Minister notes the concerns raised in your letter about Melbourne Airport's draft Major Development Plan (MDP) for the M3R, including your concerns regarding CO² emissions. While your letter falls outside the formal public exhibition process for the M3R, the Minister is conscious of the issues you have raised and their relevance to the transport sector.

As the Minister responsible for leased federal airports, Minister King takes seriously her decisions regarding airport Master Plans and MDPs. Her decision on whether or not to approve a draft Master Plan or draft MDP is contingent on whether the document is assessed as meeting the requirements of the *Airports Act 1996* (the Act).

The Minister is encouraged that your coalition members have made submissions to the operator of Melbourne Airport, Australia Pacific Airports (Melbourne) Pty Ltd (APAM), during the public exhibition period for the preliminary draft versions of its Master Plan and M3R MDP. I understand you have also been engaging directly with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications in relation to the Master Plan and MDP process.

In making submissions during the public exhibition period APAM must, by law, have due regard to each submission as relevant to either or both of the draft Melbourne Airport Master Plan and draft M3R MDP. Under the Act, all public submissions are subsequently provided to the Minister when the draft Master Plan and/or draft MDP is submitted for consideration.

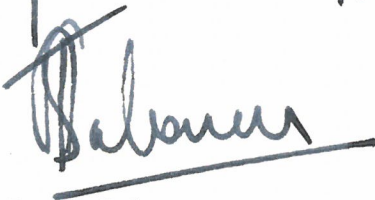
Prior to the Minister's consideration of a draft Master Plan or draft MDP, these documents are referred by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to a number of agencies for consideration, including the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). In the case of a draft MDP, this is a statutory referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to the Minister for the Environment.

The Minister notes that Airport Master Plans prepared under the Act are high-level, strategic documents that set out an airport's development objectives for 5-year, 20-year and long-term planning horizons. MDPs, in contrast, require more analysis and studies on specific issues, as defined in the Act. Importantly, approval of a draft Master Plan does not constitute automatic approval of a major development.

Feedback and assessments received from the department, agencies and other sources, including the Minister for the Environment, enable Minister King to be informed of the full extent of impacts of a proposed project, such as the M3R. In addition, if approval of a major development under the Act is granted, the Minister may apply conditions on the development.

For your information, APAM submitted its draft Master Plan, including copies of the public submissions received, to Minister King for consideration on 1 September 2022. Her department, along with a number of federal agencies, is currently assessing the draft Master Plan against the requirements set out in the Act. The Minister will make a decision on the draft Master Plan within the 50-business-day statutory timeframe set out in the Act. A decision is therefore expected to be known in late 2022. APAM cannot submit the draft M3R MDP unless the Minister approves the draft Master Plan.

Thank you for bringing your organisation's concerns to the Minister's attention.

yours sincerely,


Joseph Solomon
Chief of Staff

9 / 9 / 2022