

Meeting with Maria Vamvakimou, Calwell MP  
Wednesday 23 August 2023



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## No 3rd Tulla Runway briefing notes

• *Frank Rivoli*

Thank you for this opportunity to inform on community concern over the Melbourne Airport Third Runway development.

### Background

Residents of Calwell have raised third runway concerns with you since 2012.

During this period Melbourne Airport has excluded the public from attending CACG meetings, and has kept secret the Quigley & Watts health study.

Aircraft movement forecasts have grown

- 1990 forecast 325,000 by 2050
- 2008 forecast 397,000 worst case noise impact
- 2013 forecast 348,000 by 2033
- 2018 forecast 384,000 by 2038
- 2022 forecast 429,000 by 2042

Melbourne Airport's capacity remains uncapped. The airport land area has grown from 5300 acres to over 6000 acres.

In your speech launching the *Melbourne Airport Economic impact study* in 2018, you identified airport commercial development has potential to cause community division and if handled correctly. You said that from frequent meetings with Melbourne Airport Management they clearly understood the importance of early and open engagement. But clearly this did not include community consultation.

### Aircraft noise

The Commonwealth and airport operators define and treat aircraft noise as an annoyance. It is damaging to health, wellbeing, learning and cognitive function.

But...

- In Australia, communities have no legislated protection against aircraft noise or its consequences.
- Australia fails to implement the WHO 2018 noise guidelines for aviation.
- There is no legislated respite period for Melbourne Airport, as the Commonwealth refuses to consider curfew restriction as it has legislated for Sydney and Adelaide airports.
- The Commonwealth fails to take responsibility for the harm it approves when it knows residential housing is exposed to noise impact. In contrast Heathrow Airport London, is offering property buy back schemes funding noise attenuation of residential dwellings.
- The Commonwealth lags in forward planning for aviation, relying on the noise assessment of 1982, whilst in the UK there have been four studies between 1961 and 2007 to keep its government informed.
- The Commonwealth has regulated noise for trains, roads, industrial operations and windfarms, but leaves aircraft noise unregulated, exposing the Commonwealth to potential costs.



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- Aircraft noise is linked to serious health and educational impacts: heart and cardiovascular disease, sleep deprivation, anxiety, impaired childhood learning and cognitive development delays of between three and five months. These concerns have been confirmed in the recent health assessment by Taylor & Tonkin for Brimbank Council.
- In claiming compliance with AS2021 Building Standard, the Melbourne Airport Third Runway MDP assumes, without acoustic assessment, that external noise is reduced by 10db in residential dwellings built around 1970.
- As is evident at Brisbane Airport flight path design and usage does not mitigate aircraft noise. Legislated curfews are the only effective way to achieve measurable noise reduction.
- The Third Runway MDP ignored the residents of Bulla – located on the northern airport boundary and in close proximity to the third runway flight path. Around 255 residential dwellings and over 660 people reside in Bulla. The third runway MDP failed to provide measures of protection and have left this community abandoned.
- Aircraft noise complaint reporting by Airservices Australia doesn't record the number of noise complaint incidents only the number of complainants.

### **Inadequate consultation**

The Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group (CACG) fails to engage with the community and is self serving.

The Third Runway MDP presented to the community for feedback was not based on an approved Master Plan.

The public feedback period for the preliminary draft Master Plan and the preliminary draft Third Runway Major Development Plan was a concurrent 71 working days. Affected communities were thereby denied the legislated 60 day period for assessing the Master Plan and another 60 day period (legislated in Part 5, Division 4, Section 92(2A) (a) (b) of the Airports Act) to assess the MDP – in contrast to the practice for other Commonwealth airports in Brisbane and Perth. Logically, 60 days spent assessing the Master Plan cannot be re-spent assessing the Third Runway MDP.

As such, the transport minister has accepted for assessment an MDP that is in breach of the Airports Act 1996.

### **Summary**

We cannot continue to accept the facilitation of unregulated airport development at the cost of our health, wellbeing and environment.

### **Action is required**

- The Third Runway MPD cannot be approved until it can be demonstrated through evidence that it will not increase harmful impacts to communities.
- The Commonwealth needs to conduct its own assessment of health and environment impacts and not rely on industry assertions.
- The Quigley & Watts health assessment and peer review commissioned by Melbourne Airport, must be released for public viewing.



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- We ask you to make representation on behalf the people of Calwell to the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon. Catherine King, requesting she return its Melbourne Airport Third Runway MPD to APAM for re-assessment during a public consultation and comment period consistent with sections 79 and 92 of the Airports Act 1996.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to your reply and further communication on this issue.

# No 3rd Tulla Runway briefing notes

• Mark Carter

A 3rd runway will be bad for the climate.

## Our concerns

### 1. We're in a climate emergency.

Right now, the northern hemisphere is boiling. This year is expected to be the hottest on record (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/04/monday-was-hottest-day-for-global-average-temperature-on-record-as-climate-crisis-bites> / <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jul/19/climate-crisis-james-hansen-scientist-warning>). And right now, global emissions continue to rise.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres says we are digging our own grave. The world's most senior climate scientists are telling us we are on a path to catastrophe. Prof. Hans Joachim Schellenhuber says, "Climate change is now reaching the end-game, where very soon humanity must choose between taking unprecedented action, or accepting that it has been left too late and bear the consequences." (<http://www.climatecodered.org/2023/06/what-scientists-say.html>)

Rapid emissions reductions are required. And those already in the atmosphere, that have made the climate already too dangerous at 1.2C, need to be drawdown. (<http://www.climatecodered.org/2023/06/three-climate-interventions-reduce.html>).

But neither the federal government target of a 43% reduction in emissions, from 2005 levels, by 2030, nor Net Zero 2050, are ambitious enough (<https://www.breakthroughonline.org.au/nz2050>). What we don't hear is that there's a 10% chance the target of Net Zero emissions by 2050 won't stop warming beyond 2C, a place the world has agreed we must not go. We wouldn't get on a plane that had the same 10% chance of crashing. So we must get off the Net Zero 2050 path because the risk is too great that it will collapse our life support systems. So, for our own safety we need to massively cut emissions asap. At emergency speed. Like in a bushfire or flood, when we engage all the resources of the state in the single priority of getting to safety.

### 2. This is the context in which to assess a proposed 3rd runway's emissions.

They will be substantial, because flying is the most warming source of emissions by hour and by kilometre travelled.

And way more than reported by Melbourne Airport in its draft MDP. That's because they count only CO2 emissions, and only those during landing and take-off. We know that non-CO2 flight emissions, including nitrous oxides and contrail cirrus add twice as much warming as CO2 alone (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1352231020305689>). When total flight emissions are counted, they will be an estimated 50 times more in 2046 than the draft MDP reports ([http://www.no3rdtullarunway.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Tulla\\_3rdRunway\\_Emissions-2\\_s.pdf](http://www.no3rdtullarunway.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Tulla_3rdRunway_Emissions-2_s.pdf)).

By 2030 – when the federal government requires emissions to be reduced by 43% on 2005 levels, and the state government by 50% – emissions from domestic flights enabled by a 3rd runway will have increased by an estimated 55% ([http://www.no3rdtullarunway.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Tulla\\_3rdRunway\\_Emissions-1\\_16.pdf](http://www.no3rdtullarunway.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Tulla_3rdRunway_Emissions-1_16.pdf)).

And this will be the case even if the aviation industry's emissions response is pursued.



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That's because offsets don't actually reduce actual flight emissions (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jan/18/greenwashing-or-net-zero-necessity-climate-scientists-on-carbon-offsetting-aoe>).

And because so-called Sustainable Aviation Fuels can't cut the two thirds of non-CO2 flight emissions, and, for their marginal cuts in absolute CO2 emissions, can't be deployed at scale quickly enough ([https://stay-grounded.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/SG\\_factsheet\\_8-21\\_Biofuels\\_print\\_Lay02.pdf](https://stay-grounded.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/SG_factsheet_8-21_Biofuels_print_Lay02.pdf)).

### **3. It's because of the increased emissions it will enable, that the 3rd runway should not go ahead.**

During the climate emergency all levels of government should be calling for restraint. The federal government at the very, very least should be advocating against approval of increased emissions. Yes, that's a challenging proposition. But, like in any emergency, to get to safety we choose to restrain our normal activities. We choose to do abnormal, to get to safety.

### **We ask you**

- to please convey to Minister King these reasons for denying approval for a third runway, and
- remembering your duty of care, to oppose approval of the Third Runway.



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- *Kay Shields (who was unable to attend)*

I would like to bring your attention to a number of issues about the airport and how it negatively impacts the people of Calwell.

### **Concern 1 This community have not been effectively consulted about the impacts.**

- As a migrant yourself, you report understanding the drive for a better life and have a passion for cultural diversity. In the Calwell electorate 68% of people have both parents born overseas, and 64% also speak a Language Other than English at home. The doubling of the north south runway will greatly impact this community bringing noise, emissions and impacting health. The Master Plan and Third Runway MDP public consultation ran concurrently and the consultation period was only 70 days. The document to read and comment on was 2184 pages long, it was difficult for fluent speakers of English to complete in the time frame, let alone people who have English as a second language. The two-page leaflet in 11 languages provided by the airport was hardly adequate consultation when the north west has over 220 languages. That means many, many residents here have been effectively excluded from the conversation and have no idea of the harm this expansion will bring.

### **Concern 2 The expansion for a third runway threatens our local species through loss of habitat, and also risks further pollution to ground and waterways of the Maribyrnong Valley.**

- Victoria's grasslands are down to 1% of their former range and even though protected will be removed for the third runway. These grasslands have been extensively removed already for carparks, terminals, access roads and a growing Commercial Business Park at Melbourne airport.
- A total of 319 hectares or approx. 3 square kilometres of grasses and trees will be removed for the runway. For comparison Melbourne Cricket Ground is about 4 hectares. If that amount of needed green space was removed in any other area of Melbourne there would be an uproar.
- The third runway plan will alter Arundel Creek and put 500m of it underground and dump contaminated soil from the airport site into the headwaters of this creek. The Growling Grass Frog lives here and it will not survive this polluted habitat and the removal of water they need to breed and feed. The University of Sydney and the Australian Museum studied 87 frog species, and found almost three-quarters were intolerant of modified habitats, and that frogs needed to be prioritised in urban planning and conservation decisions. <https://www.unsw.edu.au/news/2021/05/many-australian-frogs-dont-tolerate-human-impacts-on-the-environ>
- The removal of protected Grey box trees at the airport threatens the Swift parrot, that migrates between Tasmania and Victoria. In Victoria, the over-wintering habitat of the Swift Parrot is eucalypt forests and woodlands consisting primarily of the winter-flowering Grey Box. The latest numbers published this year on the Swift parrot estimate its number at 300.

- PFAS used in earlier firefighting drills polluted soil at the airport that flowed into Arundel Creek and the section of the Maribyrnong River below the airport to Solomon's Ford. The implications for these waterways have been no fishing, no swimming and no drinking of the water. The airport no longer uses these chemicals but some of their tenants do. The Upper Maribyrnong and its tributaries currently support platypus and native fish, we cannot risk further habitat loss in our waterways by the airport digging up and removing this contaminated soil.

<https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/current-projects-issues/pfas-in-maribyrnong-catchment>

- These species need what is left of our local natural environment, but we need it too, to absorb water and carbon to cool the environment. We certainly should not be expanding heating urban infrastructure that threatens our health. Our natural environment should not be removed when we are facing rapid climate shifts.

### **Concern 3 The increase in emissions and infrastructure needed to service more flights and passengers will increase urban heating.**

- A growth in freight and logistics is planned for Melbourne airport, and this will condense traffic and increase toxic emissions that are positively connected to poor health. Researchers at Melbourne Climate Futures, show the health impacts from vehicle emissions are likely to be far higher than previous figures informing policy decisions, and are calling for urgent action to clear the air.  
<https://www.unimelb.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/february/vehicle-emissions-may-cause-over-11,000-deaths-a-year,-research-shows>
- The research states annual vehicle emissions in Australia may cause premature adult deaths, cardiovascular and respiratory hospitalisations, and active asthma cases.
- Increased emissions, combined with the removal of cooling green wedges for the runway and supporting infrastructure places this region at risk from urban heating. The tree canopy in the northern region of Melbourne is 12.1% nowhere near the 30% tree canopy needed for a liveable city. <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/data-and-insights/melbournes-vegetation-heat-and-land-use-data-heading-4>
- The north west of Melbourne has a drying climate and is set to experience temperatures 1.2-3.4 degrees hotter than other suburbs. This will impact water availability for cooling and place residents at risk.
- Exposure to extreme heat causes heat exhaustion, heatstroke and death. In January 2009, the Chief Health Officer reported that there were an estimated 374 extra deaths in Victoria during the heatwave. Heat stroke has serious consequences especially for the young and elderly. In this electorate 58% families have children and 24% of the electorate are under 14. <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/your-health-report-of-the-chief-health-officer-victoria-2018/environmental-health/heat-health>
- Exacerbation of heat may result in layoffs and loss of productivity to your electorate.
- Chronic ill health means loss of schooling, loss of work time, loss of leisure time and significant financial hardship.

### **Question**

- What can you do, as MP for Calwell, to ensure this electorate is informed about the risks they face to health and wellbeing living under an expanded airport?



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