

N01.01

18 December, 2015

Officer In Charge
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Western Sydney Airport Submission
Western Sydney Unit
GPO BOX 549
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Ms,

During November 2015, 11 councils from the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) jointly funded an independent peer review of the draft Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

After careful consideration of the results of the independent review, WSROC President Cllr Tony Hadchiti, submitted letters to Ministers Hunt, Truss and Fletcher, outlining the group's concerns regarding the inadequacy of the draft EIS document.

A copy of this letter is attached and should be considered as part of WSROC's official submission in response to the draft EIS for the proposed Western Sydney Airport.

A link to the jointly funded peer review has also been included below for your consideration and reference.

Some of the key issues identified in the draft EIS document include:

- The draft EIS does not confirm the purpose (or role) of the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) and its relationship to Kingsford Smith Airport (KSA) in the immediate, mid and longer terms.
- The raw data and modelling on which conclusions are based was not made available to the independent review teams and as a result the validity of claims made in the draft EIS could not be confirmed. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's own guidelines explicitly state that all modelling and data should be made available in support of the EIS.
- The draft EIS states the flight paths shown are an 'indicative' 'proof of concept'. As a result the draft EIS does not and cannot properly analyse the adverse impacts to the environment and the community or confirm how these will be mitigated.
- No justification was provided for the flight paths suggested in the draft Airport Plan. The draft EIS does not explain why this design was chosen and does not indicate whether any further options were considered or modelled. The Department's own guidelines for the project outlined that all flight paths (including alternative paths) must be analysed and the final choice justified.

- The draft EIS does not adequately consider the cumulative effect of projects closely associated with the Western Sydney Airport. For example the South West Priority Growth Area is mentioned briefly, yet this significant residential area is not accounted for in traffic modelling.
- The draft EIS provides no assessment of the material impacts of aircraft noise on communities and families and as a result can't offer any advice as to the scale or nature of specific noise mitigation measures.
- No detailed modelling of traffic and transport (at the local or regional levels) was conducted for this project as is common practice for other major transport projects such as WestConnex, North West Rail Link and South West Rail Link.
- Claims being made by the Commonwealth Government about economic generation and job creation have not been explicitly tested in the draft EIS. Potential adverse impacts are briefly stated with little assessment of their implications or level of significance.
- The draft EIS' conclusion that there would be low noise impact (below 50 – 55Db LAmax) on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area was not adequately justified and does not consider the value of the natural soundscape to the community and the region's significant tourism economy.
- Social determinants of health have not been considered as part of the health assessment. For example equitable access to employment and impacts on the amenity of local communities because of traffic generation associated with the airport and the surrounding enterprise precinct.
- The draft EIS assumes a rail service supporting the airport at some point in time but does not indicate when or how this will be funded.

WSROC encourages the Federal Government to consider the deficiencies identified by the peer review process as well as the concerns raised by individual councils in drafting the finalised statement.

Yours faithfully,



Charles Casuscelli
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment 1.

Western Sydney councils' independent peer review of Western Sydney Airport draft EIS.

[Western Sydney Airport EIS peer review – Part A](#)

[Western Sydney Airport EIS peer review – Part B](#)

Attachment 2.

Letter to Minister Hunt from WSROC President regarding Western Sydney Airport draft EIS - 1 December, 2015.



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Ref: N01.01.01

1 December, 2015.

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

For Information: The Hon Warren Truss MP
The Hon Paul Fletcher MP

Western Sydney Airport – Draft EIS

Dear Minister,

It is my pleasure to submit the WSROC Peer Review of the WS Airport EIS in response to the Draft EIS that was placed on public exhibition. The report can be found at: <http://www.wsroc.com.au/wsrocnews-stories/independent-review-found-gaps-to-be-addressed>

We appreciate the amount of effort that has been expended to develop the Draft EIS but as is often the case when fast-tracking these sorts of investigations significant deficiencies have been identified. The peer review has identified specific deficiencies related to a number of EIS elements and we direct your attention to the Executive Summary that provides the requisite detail.

Our greater concern is that the EIS speaks to such generalities, details non-specific assessments, does not consider alternatives and fundamentally ignores the question of what measures are proposed to minimise impacts to such a degree that the integrity of the document to fulfil its function as an EIS is called into question.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) states that an EIS will meet all requirements of the EPBC Act and the EIS guidelines issued for the proposed airport, including the requirement for public consultation. Quoting the Australian Government's own guidelines;

Environmental impact assessment depends on adequately defining those elements of the environment that may be affected by a proposed development, and on identifying the significance, risks and consequences of the potential impacts of the proposal at a local, regional and national level. The EIS will be a significant source of information on which the public and government decision-makers will assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposal.

The nature and level of investigations must be related to the likely extent and gravity of the potential impacts (including worse case scenarios).

All potential impacts of the proposal on the environment are to be investigated and analysed, and commitments to avoid, mitigate and offset any adverse impacts are to be detailed in the EIS.

In preparing the EIS the Government must consider the following aims of the EIS and public review process:

- a) To provide a source of information from which interested individuals and groups may gain an understanding of the proposal, the need for the proposal, the alternatives, the environment 1 which it could potentially affect, the impacts that may occur and the measures proposed be taken to minimise these impacts;
- b) To provide a forum for public consultation and informed comment on the proposal: and
- c) To provide a framework in which decision-makers can consider the environmental aspects of the proposal including biophysical, cultural, social, heritage, economic, technical and other factors.

The EIS must present an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts using an accepted risk based methodology and describe proposed measures to avoid, minimise or offset the expected, likely, or potential impacts.

An objective assessment of the EIS can only conclude that the current Draft demonstrably fails to fulfil the Government's own requirements for a well-informed and comprehensive document.

We encourage the Government to address the concerns raised by individual Councils and the deficiencies identified by the peer review process in drafting the finalised statement.

We note that the finalised statement must:

- take account of any comments received within the period for comment; and
- contain a summary of any such comments and how those comments have been addressed.

We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,



Tony Hadchiti
President

Attachment 1. Extract of EIS Guidelines – Western Sydney Airport (EPBC 2014/7391) 22 January 2015

Extract of EIS Guidelines – Western Sydney Airport (EPBC 2014/7391) 22 January 2015

The following EIS guidelines were not adequately addressed by the Draft EIS to varying degrees.

- It should contain sufficient information to avoid the need to search out previous or supplementary reports.
- The level of analysis and detail in the EIS should reflect the level of significance of the expected impacts on the environment. Any and all unknown variables or assumptions made in the assessment must be clearly stated and discussed.
- The EIS should be written so that any conclusions reached can be independently assessed.
- Any feasible alternatives to the action to the extent reasonably practicable, including:
 - (a) if relevant, the alternative of taking no action;
 - (b) a comparative description of the impacts of each alternative on the matters of national environmental significance and other matters protected by controlling provisions of Part 3 of the EPBC Act for the action; and
 - (c) sufficient detail to make clear why any alternative is preferred to another.Short, medium and long-term advantages and disadvantages of the options should be discussed.
- The EIS should identify and address cumulative impacts, where potential project impacts are in addition to existing impacts of other activities (including known potential future expansions or developments by the proponent and other proponents in the region and vicinity).
- The EIS must include specific and detailed descriptions of the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures based on best available practices. This must include the following elements :

A consolidated list of mitigation measures proposed to be undertaken to prevent, minimise or compensate for the relevant impacts of the action, including:

 - a detailed description of proposed measures;
 - assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of the mitigation measures;
 - any statutory or policy basis for the mitigation measures; and
 - the likely cost of the mitigation measures