
No Aircraft Noise News

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Why the tax holiday for aviation fuel?

The Federal Government must end the tax subsidy for greenhouse producing aviation fuel, a subsidy which amounted to \$770 million in 2001/2. Aviation is the most polluting form of transport per passenger kilometre, yet is subsidised by other forms of transport which produce less greenhouse gases.

Domestic aviation fuel is taxed at a mere 2.8 cents per litre, way below other transport fuels, and international aviation fuel is not taxed at all, under aviation agreements. It is amazing that aircraft emissions were not included in the Kyoto Protocol and this must be rectified in the next round of greenhouse gas reductions.

The British Government has introduced a Greenhouse Levy of 40 pounds (\$A100) on its departure tax for long haul flights, as an airport emissions tax. This can be replaced by a worldwide tax on aviation fuel as part of the next round of Kyoto green house gas reductions.

Agreements prevent taxation on international aviation fuels, but there is no limitation on taxing domestic fuels. A domestic airlines aviation fuel tax should be introduced to end the market distortion, which increase Australia's greenhouse gas production

Curfew should be longer

People living nearest to the airport are only guaranteed five hours sleep a night. Suburbs like Tempe, Kyeemagh and Mascot cop the noise from landings and take offs over Botany Bay, which can also affect Kurnell. Suburbs on other flight paths are granted a minimum of seven hours respite each night.

Newborn babies sleep about 17 hours a day, in several periods. Five year olds need 11 hours and the amount required drops until adolescence, when teenagers need about nine or ten hours sleep each night. Shift workers need to sleep during the day, along with ill people and babies.

These sleep patterns are disrupted by noisy jets using Sydney Airport. Sleep deprivation has serious effects on health and can increase work and road accidents.

Macquarie still wants shops at airport

Despite being knocked back on the shopping centre proposed for near the end of the third runway, Macquarie Airports boss Max Moore-Wilton says that they have not given up the idea. Moore-Wilton also said that Macquarie had no plans to build a second airport to relieve noise or congestion at Sydney Airport. "Second airports are so last century", Moore-Wilton told the Macquarie Airports AGM.

Federal Transport Minister Mark Vaile refused permission for the controversial bulky goods shopping centre in February, mainly on the grounds of risk to the public at that location, as well as the road traffic generated. No Aircraft Noise welcomes that decision and hopes the minister will stick to it when Macquarie comes asking again.

Privatisation of Sydney Airport – who’s won, who’s lost?

It is now five years since the Howard Government sold Sydney Airport to the Macquarie Bank consortium. As many people feared, Macquarie has put profit before people at every turn.

The airport has had a Master Plan approved which plans a huge increase in passengers, pollution, noise and risk. The airport has also produced a Ground Travel Plan that will increase the amount of car travel, compounding the pollution caused by aircraft. Howard’s transport minister also approved two twelve story car parks for the International terminal, ignoring the option of passengers using the existing railway stations beneath the airport terminals.

The Howard Government made a short term capital gain from privatising the airport and also transferred a lot of the residents’ anger to Macquarie at the same time. On the other hand, government has lost an income producing asset and restricted its options for future airport development in the Sydney region.

Macquarie has used the monopoly position of Sydney Airport to raise rents, parking fees and introduced new charges for taxis. They boast about increasing the take per passenger every year. Airlines complain about charges they face, although landing charges are regulated which has prevented price gouging by the airport.

Residents are left out in the cold. Macquarie does not recognise any obligation to mitigate or remove the noise, either by funding insulation, or moving to a new site.

Another question that can’t be answered by Macquarie Airports

At a recent briefing by Macquarie Airports, the CEO Kerrie Mather couldn’t answer the question as to whether Macquarie supported a carbon tax and carbon trading. Nor could she say whether Macquarie supported an equalisation of fuel taxes between aviation fuel and fuel for other transport modes.

At last years AGM, Max Moore-Wilton wouldn’t say whether the land at Sydney airport had a higher value for commercial or airport uses.

Editorial – NSW Labor Government abandons environment after re-election

After being re-elected in March, the NSW Labor government has made two decisions which will increase greenhouse gases. During the election Labor gave the impression that there were no plans to build the M4 East and the Marrickville Tunnel. Now they are back on the agenda. Both will increase traffic and pollution in inner Sydney, as well as contributing to global warming

The Anvil Hill coal mine will also create substantial greenhouse gases from coal. Labor’s argument that if we don’t do it, someone else will is completely irresponsible. What they don’t tell you before an election! The Howard Government found itself with a Senate majority after the 2004 election and used it to pass the Work Choices law to take away people’s job security and wages.

Howard Government caught with Sydney Airport land transfer tax

In the privatisation of Sydney Airport, the Federal Government gave Macquarie Bank an indemnity against having to pay land tax on the airport transfer. However the government has now been hit by a bill for \$400 million for land tax and interest payable to the NSW Government. Sydney Airport has been assessed as a “land rich” business, meaning that over 80% of the business is the land value and excess stamp duty must be paid.

The Howard Government obviously doesn't know about the Sydney property market. Imagine not realising that Sydney Airport was a “land rich” business. The land is far too valuable to use as an airport, which is why Macquarie keeps trying to put shopping centres there.

Anthony Albanese to arrive by parachute?

Labor MP for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese has put forward the bizarre idea that if we moved the airport out of the city, people would have to use parachutes to fly here. Surely he's flown to many cities on his Parliamentarians' Overseas Fact Finding Tours where the airport was outside the city.

He probably took a limousine or a taxi into town, but may have noticed that others were travelling in by train or bus. He should let us know if there's anywhere in the world where parachutes are used as public transport.

Health conference on air quality in tunnels

The recent National Health and Medical Research Council conference discussed the need for new regulations for road tunnels.

There was a widely held opinion that the current 'rules' look inadequate and that, besides carbon monoxide- the only component currently regulated - it is important to consider nitrogen dioxide and particles, both by themselves, but more importantly acting together.

The M5 East looks to be amongst the worst polluted urban tunnels in the developed world. What is considered bad in Europe is a daily event in the M5.

Proposed development of the Whenuapai Airbase as a second commercial airport for Auckland.

Residents of the Upper Harbour environs and North Shore of Auckland are facing a massive increase in Airport traffic if a proposed new commercial airport goes ahead.

Until about the mid-1960's Whenuapai was the International Airport for Auckland. With the advent of wide bodied jets, a new airport was built at Mangere (Auckland International Airport).

Currently the airport has minimal daily traffic with flights by the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNAF) only. This has a minimal impact on the public from a noise perspective. In contrast, the proposed airport will have no curfew and will operate 24 x 7 all year.

In 2004, the NZ government decided that the RNAF would move its operations from Whenuapai to the current RNZAF base at Ohakea, which is nowhere near a major city. A recent public consultation process with regard to alternative uses for Whenuapai Airbase received 2600 submissions and 97% of these were against any plan for a commercial airport at Whenuapai. These

included submissions from many members of the public as well as government bodies such as the Ministry of Defence, Auckland Regional Council, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Board of Airline Representatives NZ (BARNZ).

A 'whole of government' report by The Ministry of Economic Development also conclusively showed that such a development was completely unnecessary for at least 30-50 years. Auckland International Airport is due to build a second runway in the near future and even now is operating well under its capacity.

The Waitakere City Council (WCC), the territorial authority responsible for the proposed airport, is attempting to rezone the land from countryside to a special airport area so that commercial operations can be started. It has partnered with Infratil (an owner and operator of businesses in the energy, airport and public transport sectors) in a commercial venture. The Council has also spent what is believed to a substantial sum of ratepayers' money to run a publicity campaign and lobby neighbouring councils to join them in forming a commercial alliance with Infratil. Both WCC and Infratil will benefit financially from the proposed commercial venture, and this promise of revenue is the real reason Waitakere City Council is pursuing this venture. The proposed economic and community advantages of a commercial airport put forward by the proponents have been easily debunked for the smokescreen they are.

The effects of such an airport would impact on numerous residents, schools and reduce the attractiveness of the area without even knowing if it can succeed at a commercial level in the first instance.

This is another example of the distorted outcomes that can occur when local authorities and governments ignore public opinion and enter into commercial arrangements with business with no transparency in process.

Waitakere City Council is now considering whether it will appoint its own Councillors to hear the submissions on the proposed rezoning or, as objectors are demanding, involve independent Commissioners. If it uses its own Councillors the outcome is a foregone conclusion and an appeal to the Environmental Court will be required by the opponents including Whenuapai Airbase Action Group (WAAG) The appeal is anticipated to cost up to \$150,000.

If you wish to find out more about this issue or donate money to support their cause visit www.waag.co.nz.

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