

Proposed s117 Direction  
– Draft Ministerial  
Section 117  
Direction

This proposed Ministerial Direction states that the objectives are:

- (a) to avoid incompatible development in the vicinity of Canberra Airport, and
- (b) to prevent any increase in residential density of land located within the Australian Noise Exposure Forecast (ANEF) contour 20.

The objective of this proposed Direction is to apply special rules to land within the ANEF 20 contours for Canberra Airport within the Queanbeyan, Palerang and Yass Valley Council local government areas. The Australian Capital Territory is not bound by this proposed Direction.

Canberra Airport's ANEF contours, signed off but not validated by Airservices Australia, are clearly exaggerated when compared with other Australian airports. Sydney's Kingsford-Smith, Australia's largest and busiest airport is a case in point. The answer has nothing to do with aviation growth, its simply Canberra Airport management's attempt to 'reverse engineer' aircraft noise contours into areas they wish to quarantine from legitimate development. Nevertheless,

**Tralee South complies with these ANEF 20 projections.**

**Australian Standard 2021**, endorsed by all levels of government, is designed to protect residents from the impacts of aircraft noise. In recent years Canberra Airport has developed "ultimate capacity" flight projections under AS2021. These projections, although untested by any outside body, take into account the maximum number of flights that the Canberra Airport could handle twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Without the restriction imposed by a night-time curfew the owners of Canberra Airport plan to operate a 24 hour freight hub. They also predict a significant increase in passenger flights, possibly during the curfew hours in place at Sydney Airport. The air traffic would be equivalent to Sydney or Melbourne, yet Canberra has less than one tenth of their populations. This predicted growth in aircraft movements would lead to:

- an increased noise footprint over much of the Inner South Canberra population as well as parts of Queanbeyan and other Council areas.
- an increased carbon footprint for the ACT and surrounding region.
- further planning and infrastructure nightmares due to freight movement in particular.
- further planning and infrastructure nightmares as a result of the commercial growth at the airport.

Dr. Paul Mees of the University of Melbourne, in a Canberra Times article dated 3/11/07 described the unfettered commercial growth at Canberra Airport as "the *worst case of unrestrained development at any Australian airport*". More than 5 years later, despite the lasting negative effects on Canberra as a whole, the commercial growth at Canberra Airport continues unabated. However,

**Tralee South complies with standard AS2021.**

The Planning Report: Draft Queanbeyan Local Environment Plan (South Tralee) dated Sept. 2012, provides a useful background briefing to the Proposed S117 Direction – Draft Ministerial Section 117 Direction. If the S117 Direction is signed off by the Minister, land within the airport ANEF 20 footprint cannot be rezoned:

- (a) for the purposes of residential accommodation, nor increase residential densities in areas where the ANEF for Canberra Airport exceeds 20, or*
- (b) for the purposes of child care centres, educational establishments, health services facilities, respite day care centres, serviced apartments or other noise sensitive uses where the ANEF for Canberra Airport exceeds 20.*

Thus, **this Ministerial Direction proposes an instrument which treats land within the airports' ANEF 20 zone differently to land within ANEF 20 zones anywhere else in Australia.** This radical departure from accepted practices, which I understand are among the best in the world, prompts a number of questions.....

1. Why does Canberra Airport deserve special attention over and above all other Australian airports?
2. How can the decision makers justify long term a curfew free airport in such close proximity to established Canberra and Queanbeyan suburbs?
3. Does the quality of life of residents of Queanbeyan and of Inner North and Inner South Canberra play any part at all in this decision making?
4. What are the implications of this Ministerial Directive for the future, particularly in relation to the question of Badgery's Creek and Milton as possible suitable sites for Sydney's second international capacity airport?

In support of the proposed Ministerial Directive, the Planning Report (pge5) states that the directive is intended:

..... to maximise the use of Canberra Airport as an over-night freight hub and seek to ensure that curfew free operations are not compromised by concerns over aircraft noise at night.

The developers of South Tralee long ago committed to acoustic design standards exceeding those required for residences affected by noise. This proposed Directive would simply provide legislative backing for that commitment. However, in the future, **if the airport continues to operate without a night-time curfew, homes in many residential areas** of inner south Canberra, inner north Canberra, and the Queanbeyan area, including Googong, **unless retrofitted** (or built to much higher standards than are presently legislated) to improve acoustic insulation, **will be noise affected during night time hours.**

As well, **the proposed sterilisation of land inside Canberra Airport's ANEF20 ignores the possibility of high quality urban intensification in established residential areas.** Urban intensification, would, by definition, incorporate a greater thermal mass and modern building innovations. In fact, all new buildings and rebuilds should be constructed to a standard responsive to 21<sup>st</sup> century issues, which is legislated at a national level. Modern, high quality buildings would also result in facilities such as child care centres, educational establishments, health service facilities, respite day care centres and serviced apartments being shielded from noise pollution such as aircraft noise. And, by their very definition, many of these important community facilities would generally not be in use during night time hours.



**Tralee South is ideally located for urbanisation within the Jerrabomberra Valley.** The development proposal for the area responds to all relevant state planning requirements. At the same time, and, most importantly, the proposal responds to the need for environmentally responsive, affordable housing. The proposed village also lies within the urban growth containment line identified in the 2004 Canberra Spatial Plan. This means that while enhancing the amenity of the suburb of Jerrabomberra the village will be located in close proximity to Canberra employment hubs, shopping precincts and public transport links. It is past time when the ACT Government and Queanbeyan Council take a 'borderless' approach to planning for the future.

**The owners of Canberra Airport** argue that the economic growth of the airport site, maintenance of the curfew free status, plus the potential for the airport to become an alternative/overflow airport for Sydney is of national significance. Yet, these same owners have **pursued unfettered commercial development on airport land with total disregard to the planning instruments which apply in the ACT.** This commercialisation of property within the airport precinct has had a lasting negative effect on the ordered development of Canberra's town centres, small businesses, public transport systems, roads and traffic patterns. To date, development appears to be continuing unabated even though it flies in the face of the ordered long term planning strategies for the National Capital and the city of Queanbeyan.

In summary, Tralee South does not impact on Canberra Airport's desire to maintain a curfew free status. However, in the longer term, the maintenance of a curfew free status will be an imposition on thousands of residents within this valley, in the ACT and NSW. Furthermore, the airport's continued commercial growth seriously compromises the planning of Canberra and Queanbeyan.

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The Draft Ministerial Section 117 Direction clears the way for South Tralee to proceed. However, it sterilises land within the ANEF 20 that, with modern building practices, could provide a number of important community facilities to enhance the Tralee and Jerrabomberra communities. Furthermore, it prevents high quality urban intensification in established urban areas of Queanbeyan which could improve people's standard of living.

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