



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Moreton Electorate: Archerfield Airport

SPEECH

Monday, 21 March 2011

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Questioner
Speaker Perrett, Graham, MP

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Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (9.19 pm)—I rise tonight to inform the House about developments at Archerfield Airport, in my electorate, and to highlight the growing concerns of many of my constituents. Archerfield Airport is owned by the Commonwealth and has been leased to the Archerfield Airport Corporation since 1998. It is Brisbane's secondary airport and a hub for Queensland's general aviation activities, including flying training, charter flights and corporate aircraft.

Archerfield has had a long and varied history. The airport has been operating since 1929 and was Brisbane's main airport from 1930 to 1947. In World War II, Archerfield became a base for the RAAF, the US Fifth Air Force and the Royal Dutch Air Force. In fact, if you travel around Archerfield Airport and go to places like Caterpillar, you can see the old huts they used, and these are now heritage listed. In fact, my grandfather, TJ Morrissey, worked for the Americans and drove a grader during World War II. He lived down the road, at Watson Road in Acacia Ridge. So my family has had a long connection with the Archerfield Airport.

Once the current Brisbane airport site, at Eagle Farm, was selected, that became the main passenger centre. The RAAF moved a bit further west to Amberley and Archerfield became a centre for light aircraft. Under the Airports Act 1996, the Archerfield Airport Corporation is required to submit a master plan for approval and revision by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon. Anthony Albanese. In addition to addressing noise, and environmental and land use issues, the master plan is required to set out the strategic plan for the airport for the next 20 years. The drafting of the master plan also requires a public consultation period of 60 business days. Unfortunately, many of my residents did not hear about the consultation process until the 11th hour, and by this stage it was too late for them to have their say in this important master-planning process. There were many reasons for this. One of the obvious ones is that it was school holidays over Christmas, but the other one, and the most significant, was the fact that my electorate was hammered by the floods early in January. In fact, over 5,200 properties went under water because of the floods.

The draft master plan includes two particularly controversial proposals. Firstly, it introduces domestic passenger flights at Archerfield, and this is in the context of their already being concerns about noise levels from frequent air traffic at the airport. I am particularly concerned about bigger aircraft flying into this area. Secondly, Archerfield Airport proposes to realign the secondary runway to allow more room for non-aviation industries on the site. Also, the realignment will increase the air traffic over residences in my electorate. So, while I will wait to receive the formal advice from CASA and Airservices, I remain concerned that the proposed realignment of the runway will negatively impact on local residences in Archerfield, Acacia Ridge, Moorooka, Rocklea and Salisbury. I declare a self-interest because I live in the suburb of Moorooka.

It seems to me and to the many residents who have contacted me, especially in the last couple of weeks, that this realignment of the runway at Archerfield will lead to more low flights over residential areas, which will mean more noise and less sleep. The last thing residents need is more flights, more noise and more disturbances. In many ways the airport, under its director, Gavin Bird, has flourished in recent years and is quite a viable industry. It has seen an increase in flights and flight training at the airport. I know there have been a few disappointed tenants at Archerfield over the years; nevertheless, in terms of the overall success of the business, I do commend Gavin Bird for his endeavours. I am not a backwards person or a philistine; I do support aviation generally but, of course, my job is to stand up for my local residents, and they are the ones who wear the environmental noise impact of the success that has been a part of the Archerfield Airport story.

As the operations of the airport become more commercialised, as you would expect, hobby pilots and community organisations like the Air Scouts that are based at the airport have felt increasingly disenfranchised. I apologise to Ross and Lindsay and all those people who are part of the Archerfield Chamber of Commerce, who are primarily tenants associated with the airport. I do feel their pain and I do hear the many concerns they have about the changes that have come over the last few decades but, to some degree, this was an inevitable outcome of privatisation. However, I believe that, with openness, transparency and cooperation, it is possible for

Archerfield Airport to meet their commercial aims while supporting the smaller operators at the airport, such as those represented by the Archerfield Airport Chamber of Commerce, who do a sterling job for their members.

It is not my intention to take sides in this debate, but I am interested in making sure that there is proper consultation with my community, and that has not been possible because of the floods and the holiday break. I do want to ensure the best for my community, and I believe in balance and genuine consultation. Archerfield Airport has a proud history, and I believe it will continue to have an important role in aviation in Brisbane and South-East Queensland.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper)—I call the honourable member for Burke.

Ms Burke—Chisholm.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Chisholm, sorry.

Ms Burke—Don't worry; everyone does it. It's okay. The wonderful seat of Burke, tragically, got abolished. But never mind!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Normally you have to be dead to have an electorate named after you!

Ms Burke—It was the right spelling, too.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—It is a resurrection. I call the member for Chisholm.