



Our mission is to help conserve the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

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WHY DO I OPPOSE BADGERYS CREEK AIRPORT?

© **Ross Coster**

[Convenor of Blue Mountains Conservation Society No Badgerys Creek Airport Subcommittee]

1. ♦ **Impact on World Heritage.**

The Blue Mountains National Parks were declared as World Heritage in 2000, primarily for their eucalypt biodiversity.

What will be the impact on this biodiversity of a 24-hour, no curfew airport only 17 km away? Burned avgas, fine particulates, noise, potential fuel dumping, all raining down on the eucalypt forests we all know and love.

The whole point of World Heritage Listing is to commit all levels of Government to preserving the area for the whole world to enjoy.

The listing process stalled in the late 1990's as UNESCO were worried about the impact of a Western Sydney Airport. An Airport at Badgerys Creek risks World Heritage status for the Blue Mountains.

2. ♦ **Impact on Drinking Water Catchments.**

Much of the Southern Blue Mountains forms the catchments for Lake Burragorang, which supplies 80% of Sydney's drinking water.

Once the Airport is operational, flights to the West will have to fly over either the Blue Mountains townships (political poison), or the drinking water catchments. The by-products of aircraft will rain down in the catchments and end up in Sydney's drinking water.

The 'Special Areas' are there to exclude humans, to provide a buffer around the lake, to ensure water quality. Flying large numbers of huge, noisy, polluting aircraft over the catchments is dangerous and risky.

3. ♦ **Wilderness Areas**

The Blue Mountains includes several declared Wilderness Areas. In a declared Wilderness area you must be self-reliant, so no machines are allowed, no mountain bikes, no cars, and no helicopters. The Badgerys Creek Airport threatens all of this.

How can we on a Wilderness walk, or the animals that live in these pristine areas, enjoy the quiet and fresh air with a steady stream of aircraft flying overhead, belching out particulates and noise?

How is it we can't take even the most simple machine into Wilderness, but our most complex machines are able to fly over it?

4. ♦ **Tourism**

Tourists come to the Blue Mountains to enjoy the views, the hospitality, the bushwalks, and the rides at Scenic World.

What will happen to the tourism industry when tourists report back to their friends that their quiet enjoyment of the bush was ruined by an aircraft flying overhead? Will the view south from Echo Point be the same with a huge aircraft in the eye line?

5. ♦ **Our Communities**

Everybody who lives in the Blue Mountains came here for a different reason, but we are all united in loving the Community we live in.

Cafes, street markets, the Winter Magic parade, leafy streets, hundreds of easy and hard bushwalks, lookouts, Aboriginal and European culture, art, theatre, we have it all. After 30 years here, I cannot imagine living somewhere else.

We put up with a lot us Mountain folk, from endless Highway upgrades, to poor train services, hours commuting to

far-away jobs, and bushfires threatening our homes. But we love the place, and do not want it ruined by 24-hour aircraft noise.

6. ♦ **Hasty Process**

The Abbott Government announced Badgerys Creek Airport as a fait accompli, to be built, not discussed, as they want to be seen as 'getting on with it'.

Part of his hasty process was to initially claim that an Environmental Impact Statement was not necessary, as one was done in 1997! They relented on this, and an EIS is currently being prepared.

When it is released, we will have just 20 days to respond, to a potentially massive and complex study. We want a longer comment period of at least 60 days, and have written to the Environment Minister asking for this.

7. ♦ **Not Needed**

Kingsford Smith Airport at Mascot runs at about 60% of capacity. It has handled the same number of flights per hour (80) for many years, with growth in passenger numbers catered for by bigger planes, not more flights.

Half of all passenger movements through Mascot are to and from East-coast destinations, including Melbourne (24%), Brisbane (13%) Gold Coast (7%), Canberra (3%) as well as Albury, Coffs Harbour and Newcastle.

The proposed High Speed Rail network would have stations at all of these places, potentially removing half of the current passengers from Mascot.

8. ♦ **Not in anyone's back yard**

My answer to people who claim that our opposition to Badgerys Creek is just NIMBY (not in my back yard) is simple, NIABY (not in anyone's back yard).

We need to build transport infrastructure that reduces flights at Mascot, for the benefit of the millions affected by aircraft noise and pollution, not increase the flights at a second Airport, and go on to affect millions more.

We need transport infrastructure that can run on renewable energy, not burn irreplaceable oil-based fuels that pollute the Global atmosphere.

We need integrated transport planning that looks at the effects on people and the environment of each option, not just 'getting on with it' to appear decisive and strong.

9. ♦ **What can we do?**

We have formed a No Badgerys Creek Airport Sub-Committee (needs a new name!) to run a campaign against the Airport. If you want to get involved, contact me and come to a meeting to see what we are doing.

You can write to the Environment Minister, Greg Hunt (PO Box 6022 Canberra ACT 2600) asking him to extend the EIS comment period. (A sample letter is on page 6.)

You can write to Politicians of all Parties insisting that we don't need or want an Airport in Western Sydney.

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July 2015