



# Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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## Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

25 March 2024

Hon Tanya Plibersek MLA  
Minister for the Environment and Water  
PO Box 6022  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: [Minster.Plibersek@dcew.gov.au](mailto:Minster.Plibersek@dcew.gov.au)

Dear Minister Plibersek

### **Federal Inquiry to mitigate the impacts of flight paths and airspace design for Western Sydney International Airport**

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) is a community-based volunteer organisation with over 850 members. Our mission is to help protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society is writing to you to ask for a public inquiry under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Cth) 1999* to consider and assess the public comments regarding the proposed flight paths for the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI) as set out in the Environmental Impacts statement (EIS) recently on exhibition.

The Society believes that the EIS assessment has been totally inadequate in its consideration of the impacts to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA), in particular

- the impacts on the native animals and other fauna;
- the significant destruction of the natural quiet of the area;
- the degrading of the extensive wilderness in the GBMWA. This wilderness is recognised by UNESCO as a critical contributor to the GBMWA's Outstanding Universal Value;
- visual impacts to the landscape and its scenic and tourism values.

## Reasons for a public inquiry

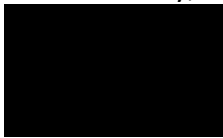
There has been no attempt to mitigate the impacts as they are being largely discounted and not adequately investigated. Baseline noise levels in the WHA and adjacent natural areas have not been seriously examined. The Society believes that the proposal would degrade the integrity of the WHA. As well, the EIS has failed to consider realistic options for the flight paths partly by not considering how the total flight movements in the Sydney basin and adjacent ocean could be managed.

A public inquiry would allow for a public and thorough assessment of the flight paths options to mitigate the issues that the EIS has downplayed and failed to assess. Importantly, that assessment could provide more equitable flight paths options by consideration of the whole of the Sydney metropolitan airspace including the ocean. Western Sydney residents have demonstrated over many years that they are not easily accepting of greater Sydney decisions which have inequitable impacts on their region of Sydney.

Major infrastructure projects in NSW are routinely assessed through public inquiries. A Federal public inquiry is permitted under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act* sections 87 and 90 which allows for the Minister to change the method of assessment. A public inquiry would provide a transparent and more equitable outcome and protection for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this concern.

Yours sincerely,



Annette Cam  
President  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

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