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MEDIA RELEASE

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Concern over environmental impact as EIS on Western Sydney International airport flight paths released

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society welcomes the release of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on proposed flight paths for Western Sydney International (WSI) Airport.

"This is a substantial document that we will be reviewing in detail before submitting our recommendations to the Minister for the Environment to ensure conservation priorities are considered," said Ms Annette Cam, President, Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

The final EIS, released by Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) last week, provides the community with another opportunity for comment before the flight paths are finalised.

The Society's key concerns centre are the environmental and noise impacts affecting the Greater Blue Mountains Area (GBMA) and nearby conservation zones while Residents Against Western Sydney Airport (RAWSA), is reviewing the EIS to address the anticipated effects on residents. Insight from the EIS process shows that it generated 8,477 submissions, with the majority coming from the Sydney Basin. Of these less than 1% were supportive of the project and 68% clearly objected.

Initial findings by Society raise serious concerns over several issues, including:

- The EIS anticipates that residents to the northeast and southwest of WSI will face unavoidable noise impacts.
- There will be unavoidable adverse impacts on scenic views across significant areas of the GBMA, including Echo Point at Katoomba and the Grose Valley, which will be hard to mitigate.

- Predicted increases in air traffic, from 81,000 movements per year in 2033 to 107,000 by 2040, raise concerns about the cumulative impacts on the GBMA's heritage values and natural tranquillity, over time.
- The EIS appears to misunderstand the ambient noise levels in remote areas of the GBMA. It assumes that the noise currently experienced in Blue Mountains villages (due to road traffic and recreational activities) applies across the entire GBMA, downplaying the potential disturbance caused by aircraft noise at altitudes between 2,000 and 10,000 feet (approximately 50-70 dBA).
- Potential effects of noise on local fauna, including birds and other species sensitive to anthropogenic noise, have been dismissed in the EIS, despite international studies indicating that such noise can have significant impacts on wildlife.

"There is no proposal to collect baseline data about noise levels, nor data on species of fauna present in any of the GBMA or close natural areas such as Burratorang State Conservation Area, which is a significant oversight," explained Ms Cam.

"Noise data should be a priority, followed by regular monitoring of noise levels and impacts on species once the airport opens - this needs to be a condition recommended by the Minister to DITRDAC so that mitigation of any adverse impacts can occur as soon as they become apparent," she concluded.

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For more information or to request an interview please contact:

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