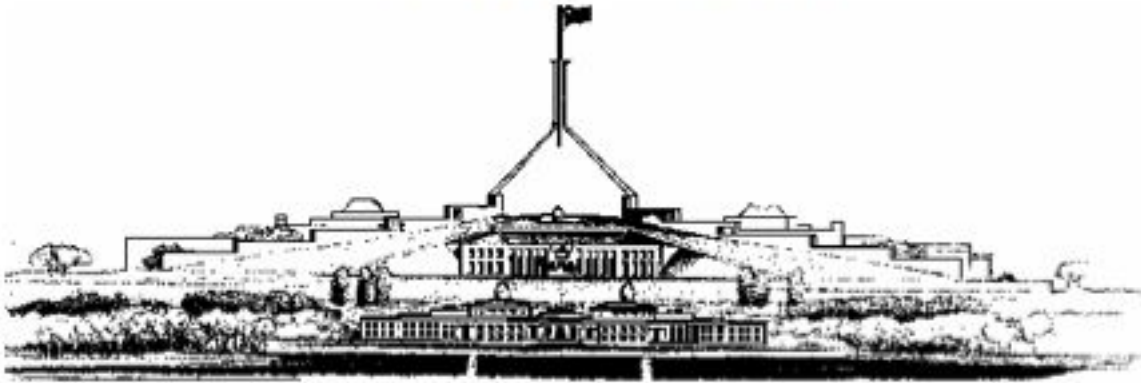




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AIRPORTS AMENDMENT BILL 2010

Second Reading

SPEECH

Thursday, 30 September 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 30 September 2010
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Questioner
Speaker Albanese, Anthony, MP

Source House
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Responder
Question No.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (9.15 am)—I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I am reintroducing into the parliament the Airports Amendment Bill 2010 to give effect to many of the government's airport planning and development policies that were announced in the aviation policy white paper, *Flight path to the future*. These policies have been subject to extensive consultation with stakeholders in the aviation industry and the community and also with state, territory and local governments. I introduced this bill into the last parliament but the bill lapsed when it was prorogued. At the time, the bill was referred to the Senate Standing Legislation Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport. The committee commenced an inquiry into the bill. However, it did not have the opportunity to fully examine the bill before the caretaker period began. I want to thank those people and businesses that took the time to prepare submissions for the inquiry. This bill is a priority for the government and I welcome further debate.

Significant reforms are needed to get the balance right between the need for ongoing investment in aviation infrastructure, community consultation and the integration of airport planning with local, state and territory planning regimes.

This government is committed to ensuring sustainable growth in aviation, underpinned by meaningful engagement and consultation with the community and stakeholders.

As airports get busier and our major cities grow, airport planning assumes an increased importance.

Airports are not islands. Better integration of on- and off-airport planning is in everyone's interests—airport operators, airlines, fare-paying passengers, local communities and businesses.

The public rightly demands better information and consultation when it comes to airport development, especially the impacts of aviation on neighbouring communities close to our airports. The Gillard government is committed to better urban planning, and the reforms contained in this bill complement and support our national agenda on major cities.

The amendments contained in this bill underscore the objectives of the Airports Act, including:

- to promote the sound development of civil aviation in Australia;
- to establish a system for the regulation of airports that has due regard to the interests of airport users and the general community; and
- to promote the efficient economic development and operation of airports.

The need to strengthen airport master plans was a recurring theme in submissions and meetings during the 20-month consultation and development period for the national aviation policy white paper.

The Airports Amendment Bill 2010 will strengthen airport master plans through a number of new requirements.

Firstly, airport master plans will need to include a ground transport plan which shows how the airport's facilities connect with the surrounding road and public transport system.

Secondly, airport master plans will need to include additional detail on proposed use of land in the first five years of the plan, including detailed information on proposed non-aeronautical developments.

Thirdly, airport master plans will need to have information on the number of jobs likely to be created, anticipated traffic flows, and the airport's assessment of the potential impacts on the local and regional economy and community.

Fourthly, airport master plans will need to include detailed analysis on how they align with state, territory and local government planning laws, as well as a justification for any inconsistencies.

Fifthly, airport environment strategies will now be part of airport master plans. This will ensure that the community has comprehensive information about proposed developments at airports and that airport operators can focus on a single public consultation and approval process.

Community consultation over major developments at airports is very important, and this bill will add an important extra trigger for major development plans.

As a result of this bill, any proposed development that is likely to have a significant impact on the local or regional community will be required to go through a major development plan process. Similarly, any alteration of a runway, including a runway alteration that changes flight paths or patterns of levels of aircraft noise, will be subjected to public consultation under a major development plan approval process.

These are important amendments to improve community consultation and the oversight of airport developments.

Given that the primary purpose of an airport is the provision of aeronautical services, a range of activities, such as long-term residential developments, residential aged or community care facilities, nursing homes, hospitals and schools, are likely to be incompatible with the long-term operation of an airport. Under this bill, these incompatible developments will be prima facie prohibited unless the airport is able to demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances for taking the development to the next stage.

In recognition of the economic importance of our major airports, this bill allows developments covered in detail in the master plan to be considered for a reduced period of public comment if the development proposal is consistent with the master plan and, importantly, does not raise any issues that have an impact on the community.

The bill also allows for the approval process for aeronautical developments to be streamlined where appropriate safeguards are met.

Other minor technical and housekeeping amendments be made by this bill include:

- removing certain items made redundant by previous amendments to the act;
- updating the names of a couple of airports; and
- clarifying the operation of certain sections of the act.

The changes to the act are supported by other non-legislative reform contained in the government's aviation white paper. These include the requirement for all leased federal airports to have community consultation groups with independent chairs, and for capital city airports to also have a high level planning forum with the state government and my department.

The government's white paper was Australia's first ever national blueprint for aviation. This bill furthers the implementation of the reforms contained in that document. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Chester**) adjourned.