



West Australian
03-Mar-2011
 Page: 1
 General News
 By: Geoffrey Thomas
 Market: Perth
 Circulation: 192230
 Type: Capital City Daily
 Size: 274.99 sq.cms
 Frequency: MTWTF--

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Minister rejects plan to cut down aircraft noise

GEOFFREY THOMAS

Residents living under Perth Airport flight paths will have to keep putting up with aircraft noise after the Federal Government rejected solutions including installing sound insulation in their homes.

A Senate inquiry into the effectiveness of Airservices Australia's handling of aircraft noise also recommended altering flight paths to share the noise with other suburbs and changing noise measurement to a more sensitive European system.

But the Gillard Government has decided that despite the inquiry's findings, Perth Airport is not noisy enough to warrant the measures.

About 220,000 people live in suburbs surrounding Perth Airport and more than 400 flights take off and land each day.

Passenger numbers are increasing about 10 per cent a year.

Steve Irons, the Federal member for Swan, yesterday challenged Federal Transport Minister Anthony Albanese to visit his eastern suburbs electorate.

"The noise is just as bad as his electorate in Sydney," Mr Irons said. "The Labor Government says it will not provide noise insulation to Perth residents on the grounds that ANEF (Australia Noise Exposure Forecast) contours show noise to be not that bad.

"I challenge the Minister to come to the electorate of Swan and sit down and listen to the noise in some local homes."

The ANEF system was developed in 1980.

"It has long been my view that ANEF should not be used as the standard noise indicator for planning purposes in Australia as it is outdated and underestimates real noise in the community." A noise insulation program has been completed in Sydney and Adelaide, with 4,730 homes and 106 other buildings near their airports insulated for \$470 million.

A similar scheme in Perth would include about 2,000 homes and public buildings and cost about \$250 million which would be paid for by a levy on air tickets.

"It would just cost \$5 a ticket for five years," Mr Irons said.

"Everyone — industry, airport and government — need to be working together on this".

Perth Airport chief executive Brad Geatches said the airport was committed to working with community representatives, local government authorities, airlines, air traffic controllers and relevant government agencies to manage aircraft noise.

"We are working closely with Airservices Australia and the recently appointed Aircraft Noise Ombudsman to ensure that Perth residents are engaged in aircraft noise issues and that appropriate responses are put in place," Mr Geatches said.

> COMMENT. REACTION

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