



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND URBAN RENEWAL

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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Planning for the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency Centre (SPIRE) and the Canberra Hospital campus and immediate surrounds.

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Submission to the

Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal

Inquiry into Planning for the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency Centre (SPIRE) and the Canberra Hospital campus and immediate surrounds

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Submission to the Inquiry into Planning for the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency Centre (SPIRE) and the Canberra Hospital campus and immediate surrounds

Summary

The new emergency department for the Canberra Hospital must not be located in the Surgical Procedures, Interventional Radiology and Emergency (SPIRE) Centre if this Centre is built at the corner of Gilmore Crescent and Palmer Street, Garran. This is because locating the emergency department on this site will:

- result in an unacceptable risk to public safety – pedestrians, cyclists and drivers and passengers of vehicles – with a particular risk to children attending Garran Primary School; and,
- have an adverse effect on the learning of children attending Garran Primary School.

The risk to public safety arises from vehicles taking people to the emergency department.

The adverse effect on children's learning is from aircraft noise – the ambulance/rescue helicopter.

The ACT Government has said that the site decision was made after extensive consultation with clinicians (*The Canberra Times* 25 October 2019). However, the interaction between the proposed emergency department and its immediate surrounds outside the Canberra Hospital campus seems to have been ignored. This is totally unacceptable given the risk to public safety and the adverse impact on school children's learning.

Planning for the location of a new emergency department must be re-done. The revised planning must incorporate the interaction between the proposed emergency department and its immediate surrounds outside the Canberra Hospital campus with the objective of eliminating and minimising adverse impacts, particularly on school children.

Introduction

I have lived in Hughes and Curtin for 40 years. I drive along Palmers St, Gilmore Crescent, Kitchener St, Yamba Drive and Hindmarsh Drive regularly. I donate blood at the Red Cross centre which is close to the proposed site for SPIRE. I have driven people to the emergency department of Canberra Hospital. I have been driven to the emergency department. I have visited people who are in Canberra Hospital.

So, I am familiar with the proposed site. It is simply an extremely poor location for a hospital emergency department because of the adverse impacts on people in its immediate surrounds outside the Canberra Hospital campus. These adverse impacts will be particularly severe for children attending Garran Primary School which is located opposite the proposed site.

Risk to public safety

The risk to public safety from locating a hospital emergency department on residential streets and opposite a primary school is unacceptably high. The risk is not from ambulances: their drivers are well trained and highly skilled. The risk is from all the other vehicles rushing to take some-one to emergency. The drivers of these vehicles will be worried and distracted.

They are likely to be going fast. They are very likely to ignore the 40kph speed limit in the school zone. Consequently, they will pose an unacceptably high level of risk of injury and death, particularly to school children.

The Canberra Hospital emergency department should be located on major road such as Yamba Drive to minimise the risk to public safety from vehicles taking people to the emergency department.

Adverse effect on children's learning

There have been a number of studies of the impact of aircraft noise on the learning of school children. A consistent finding of these studies is that repeated exposure to aircraft noise is associated with poorer reading performance in school children, with teacher's reports indicating that severe disruptions of classroom instruction due to aircraft noise may contribute to the effect on reading. There is also good evidence for aircraft noise adversely effecting standardised assessment test scores and long-term and short-term memory.

References for a number of studies of the impact of aircraft noise on the learning of school children are listed in the Appendix. (Note that this is far from a comprehensive list of studies.)

The adverse impact of aircraft noise on school children's learning is a critical issue for this inquiry as Garran Primary School is so close to the site proposed for the landing pad for the ambulance/rescue helicopter.

Given the adverse impact of aircraft noise on the learning of school children, one key objective for locating the helicopter landing pad associated with a hospital emergency department must be to maximize the distance between the landing pad and a school. However, the proposal for SPIRE is to move the landing pad closer to Garran Primary School.

Planning for the location of a new emergency department must be re-done with the objective of minimising adverse impacts on learning of children attending Garran Primary School.

Appendix: Some references to studies of the impact of aircraft noise on school children's learning.

Staffan Hygge and Rokho Kim

Environmental noise and cognitive impairment in children

Chapter 3 of *Burden of disease from environmental noise*, World Health Organisation, 2011

Charlotte Clark and Katarina Paunovic

WHO Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region: A Systematic Review on Environmental Noise and Cognition

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, vol. 15, 285–307 (2018)

Maria Klatte, Jan Spilski, Jochen Mayerl, Ulrich Möhler, Thomas Lachmann, and Kirstin Bergström

Effects of Aircraft Noise on Reading and Quality of Life in Primary School Children in Germany: Results From the NORAH Study

Environment and Behavior, vol. 49(4) 390–424 (2017)

Maria Klatte, Kirstin Bergström and Thomas Lachmann

Does noise affect learning? A short review on noise effects on cognitive performance in children

Frontiers in Psychology, vol. 4, article 578 (2013)

S A Stansfeld, B Berglund, C Clark, I Lopez-Barrio, P Fischer, E Öhrström, M M Haines, J Head, S Hygge, I van Kamp, B F Berry, on behalf of the RANCH study team

Aircraft and road traffic noise and children's cognition and health: a cross-national study

The Lancet, vol. 365, 1942–1949 (2005)