

7 September 2006

Cr Joe Natoli  
Mayor  
Maroochy Shire Council  
PO Box 76  
NAMBOUR  
Qld 4560

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your informative talk at the TWRA meeting this week which addressed, inter alia, concerns regarding the future development of the canelands, water and the progress of the draft Master Plan for Maroochy Airport.

Perhaps the residents of Twin Waters are unusually well mannered and didn't wish to engage in public debate about your points relating to the airport draft master plan. However, it was brought to our attention by a number of residents after the meeting that there were some inadequacies and contradictions in your comments on the future of the airport.

Firstly, you pointed out that no early decision was possible on the East / West runway due to numerous studies and reports still to be undertaken, yet you then proceeded to state that in your opinion the need for the East / West runway was some years away in the future (long term rather than short term) as the current runway was wide enough to cope with aircraft the size of the A320. This would indicate that you have already formed a view on the decision without waiting for the relevant reports. The consultative and decision making process must be undertaken with an open mind and without a predetermined outcome to the fore.

Secondly, your statement that you must act for the benefit of all of the Maroochy ratepayers (as shareholders in the airport) indicates a desire to maximise profits from this asset. This is admirable, but as some residents pointed out, one group in the community namely the North Shore residents (in our case Twin Waters, but not forgetting also Mudjimba, Marcoola, Pacific Paradise etc) should not bear the burden of the social costs for the rest of Maroochy Shire's cash cow. No matter how advanced the technology of the current aircraft compared with the older aircraft that you highlighted during your talk, all aircraft cause noise and the impact is considerable when one lives with it on a daily basis. This will only increase with the projected growth of the population and the growth in tourist numbers.

Thirdly, you mentioned budget constraints and cost overruns on construction which could cause the cost to exceed \$100 million. The opinion of those who commented afterwards was that this probably would be the case, but that this is a reason to do it now since delaying the construction of the East / West runway would mean that the cost would be even greater in the future. Some people also spoke of the need for Councillors to take the hard decisions now, rather than hand them on to a future group of Councillors, which seems an easy option. Some people also expressed concern at the possible development of a Convention Centre (and its cost) before developing the East / West runway. There are already four and five star hotels with some convention facilities so the East / West runway should have a higher priority.

In summary, therefore, we urge you and your council to make a paradigm shift in attitudes towards the East / West runway. The paradigm should become "How can we do it now" and not "Why we can't do it now". We appreciate that there is still work to be done, but a paradigm shift such as this will make the "art of the possible" happen faster and this will provide considerable political and social goodwill and financial benefits for the Maroochy Shire Council.

Yours faithfully