

Submission 82 – Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into Delivery Drones

Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure

I am a resident of Bonython in the ACT, and lived through the Bonython Wing delivery drone trial in 2018.

For me and the majority of residents in Bonython the experience of delivery drones was negative and traumatic.

The trial caused a great deal of turmoil for residents because of the noise, the lack of privacy residents felt with a private companies aircraft flying over us, and how we noticed the wildlife in the area, especially the birds, disappear.

Firstly, the ACT government and Wing did not consult with residents before the trial was approved and a lease signed for the land from which the drones were launched. They had discussions between themselves, but did not approach residents of Bonython for their input, even though we were the ones who were to be subject to the trial. The local dog training facility, over which the drones flew, was also not consulted.

The main impact of the delivery drones was the noise. It was invasive. You could hear it in a well insulated house with double glazed windows that were closed.

The noise of the drones destroyed the peaceful amenity of our homes and suburb when they were flying.

Whether you were inside or outside, the noise of the drones was disruptive. That disruption was detrimental to our mental health, as over time, the loss of our peaceful environment wore us down.

I had residents share with me that as shift workers they found it hard to sleep during the day due to the drones. You couldn't take a walk in peace and quiet and enjoy our local reserves because of the loud sound of the drones tearing through. Mothers couldn't get their babies and toddlers to take their naps during the day. Veterans felt compelled to get back on their PTSD medication because they were distressed by the noise. People couldn't go into their backyards or enjoy their gardens because the peace was destroyed as a drone went over their heads. People couldn't rest and recover from hard work week. Elderly residents were in tears. There were days when I had to take my distressed children to their grandparents house in another suburb for the whole day to get some respite from the noise. Other residents said to me if the drones continued to fly, they would move.

From my experience of living with delivery drones, they are not suitable for quiet suburban areas. In my opinion, they destroy the soundscape and visual landscape of a suburb. I don't know how anyone can claim they are sustainable or environmentally friendly, when they negatively alter the environment they enter.

As far as I am aware, the current delivery drones make noise at 64 decibels, which in my opinion, is way too high for residential areas. This level of noise, especially if thousands of drones are flying overhead, is unsustainable. It is unreasonable that any government authority would expect people to happily tolerate that. There is no way the peaceful amenity of our homes and suburbs can be maintained with that level of noise. How is the Department of Infrastructure going to guarantee our rights by law regarding peaceful enjoyment of our homes?