

Letter to the ANCCG from former Community Rep Mark Easson

The proposal announced at the last meeting in September to remove the restrictions on Smart Approaches needs much examination and an explanation of the history of their introduction. The caps on the daily numbers were not arbitrary as stated by Airways, there were good reasons for them.

I joined the ANCCG 9 years ago after the approach trials had been conducted to ascertain their acceptability from a noise perspective. It was found that because of the high accuracy of the airborne GPS systems each smart approach overflowed the same houses every time. So instead of sharing the noise around, the same people got hit with each smart approach.

It was never a question of how much noise; it was one of how often. Hence it was decided through the Group and in consultation with all parties to limit the number of daily approaches to minimise the disturbance to the same people, mainly in the Eastern suburbs.

To explain briefly as an example the “Yellow X-Ray” approach to Runway 23 has a very short base leg over East Tamaki and close in suburbs with a turn onto final at 1000’. Conventional “standard” approaches join final further out at between 3000- and 4000-foot altitude. This means that during the latter stages of the approach aircraft are flying lower over residential areas than previously, and always on the same accurate path.

It is true that these approaches are more economical and efficient than before. The noise levels are predicated on idle thrust, i.e. low power being used until lining up on final approach and with good planning no noisy aerodynamic speed braking. However, no matter how good the training is, I know as a former heavy jet pilot and simulator instructor that speed brakes are used more than half the time in order to comply with the late speed reduction required.

I presume there will be more trials to see if there is an increase in complaints because during the original trials there was considerable

negative feedback. Whatever the change I strongly advocate in the interests of the residents involved that the caps remain for the weekends and holidays when people are enjoying time at home.