

PRESS RELEASE

for immediate use

BAA: "time to come clean about your new tenants"

Residents groups unite to ask BAA why Future Heathrow has been given offices at Heathrow Airport

Residents groups HACAN ClearSkies and NoTRAG (No Third Runway Action Group) have issued a united call to BAA to come clean on whether or not they support Future Heathrow after it emerged that the pro-expansion pressure group had set up its offices in a BAA-owned building. Lord Soley, the group's Campaign Director, is operating out of Queens Building at Heathrow Airport. Yet, at last week's Central London launch of Future Heathrow, BAA was not down as one of the group's official backers (1).

NoTRAG spokeswoman Christine Shilling said, "NoTRAG now publicly challenges Janis Kong to state without duplicity just what is BAA's role here. She has told us "RESIDENTS CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT BAA SAYS" (2). And yet here we have BAA apparently secretly supporting Future Heathrow whose objective is stark - lobby until the voiceless and powerless who will lose homes, schools, churches and communities are marginalised. Perhaps there's truth, lies and BAA speak.'

John Stewart, Chair of HACAN ClearSkies, said, "Whatever way you look at it, BAA has scored an embarrassing own goal. It's a bit like Chris Tarrant accepting bed and breakfast from a contestant the night before she's going on 'Who wants to be a Millionaire?'. It may be perfectly innocent, but suspicions wouldn't half be aroused. BAA should clear up all doubt by evicting Future Heathrow from its premises."

This is the second embarrassment within a week for Future Heathrow and its director, the former Labour MP, Clive Soley. Its launch was mired in controversy when it emerged that Transport Secretary of State Alistair Darling had attended. An environmental protester had smothered the Secretary of State in carrot cake when he rose to speak.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

(1). Future Heathrow was launched at the CBI headquarters in Central London on 23rd May. Its key backers include the CBI, the London Chamber of Commerce, British Airways, the TUC and the Transport and General Workers Union. Clive Soley, Labour MP for Ealing, Acton and Shepherds Bush until the last Election, was unveiled as its Campaign Director. **BAA is not listed as one of its backers.**

(2) Janis Kong 20 November 2002

HACAN: represents residents under the Heathrow flight path.

NoTRAG (No Third Runway Action Group) is a non-party political group whose aim is 'to prevent the expansion of Heathrow Airport into the area outside of its existing boundaries.' This means NO THIRD RUNWAY AT HEATHROW.

For further information contact:

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Here's BAA response

Spokesperson for BAA:

"We have agreed to provide office space to Future Heathrow on the basis that it is an independent body which is looking to support the future interests of the airport. Future Heathrow is aligned to some of our key stakeholders, IATA/airlines, who already have office space at Heathrow. It makes sense for them to use the same facilities.

The fact that they are using some of our office space does not mean that Future Heathrow represents BAA Heathrow's lobbying arm."

Philip Case
Slough & Windsor Observer Newsroom

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