

**Save the Moorabbin Golf Course Group submission to
Safeguards for airports and the Communities around them Discussion Paper
30th June 2009**

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1.Introduction

The Save the Moorabbin Golf Course Group [STMGCG] is pleased to make this submission to the “Safeguards for airports and the Communities around them” Discussion paper.

We are very concerned about the Moorabbin Airport Corporation [MAC] activities resulting in the loss of Kingston’s only 18 hole Public Golf Course, decreased safety of the airport and the detrimental effects that MAC’s developments will have on the 100,000 or more people living and working around the perimeter of the airport.

Minister Albanese has informed us he “ takes the matter of public consultation very seriously and considers all submissions ”.

We sincerely hope this statement to be true .

2. Background.

2.1 The STMGSG was formed in 2006 with the aim of preserving the City of Kingston’s only 18 hole Public Golf Course. The Group has 18 committee members supported by over 1200 petitioners seeking retention of the Golf Course.[appendix 1]

2.2 The Moorabbin Golf Course. City of Kingston signed a 10 year lease with MAC for use of the golf course in November 1998.

According to the current [2004] Airport Master Plan ,the Moorabbin Airport Corporation (MAC) intends to build factories, offices, retail developments and warehouses over virtually all of the 118 hectares of non aviation use land [i.e. 2/5ths of the total airport land] including all of the golf course [example appendix 2].

We strongly believe MAC has not adequately addressed the loss of Public amenity, noise, safety and environmental issues which are the certain consequences of their proposed non aviation development. Neither has MAC been in any way amenable to compromise or suggestions of moderating such wholesale development.

3. The Golf course.

3.1 Background

Golf has been played on the airport land since the early 1970’s, providing a wide range of desirable outcomes for our community.

3.2 Reasons for preserving the Golf Course

3.2.1 Golf related

- a) This is the only 18 hole public golf course in the city of Kingston.
- b) To replace it would cost the community many millions of dollars.
- c) It offers low cost golf to many young people starting out in the game.
- d) Nearby private golf clubs are too expensive for many retired or young people to join.
- e) It has a practice driving range and professional tuition available.
- f) Its terrain is relatively flat and its modest length makes it ideal for young learner golfers and the growing numbers of older golfers who play regularly.
- g) It was the home of the Moorabbin Golf Club with a ten year average membership of approximately 400 members, some of whom put up personal guarantees for the building of the clubhouse.
- h) The course hosts at least seven local schools for student tuition and recreation.
- i) It is convenient for most residents of Kingston to get to and children can easily ride their bikes to the course.
- j) Many golfers from neighboring councils play at Moorabbin, because it is an 18 hole course.
- k) It offered good golf equipment and supplies for sale at very reasonable prices.

3.2.2 Health & Safety

- a) Provides regular exercise and social contact for many older citizens to aid their physical well being and mental health. Approximately 60,000 rounds of golf are played annually, 8% of which represent the Golf Club Members, the remaining 92% are public players many of whom are retirees.
- b) Helps combat obesity in young people by providing exercise & outdoor activity. The golf course offers low fees, suited to younger or retired people's budgets.
- c) **Acts as a safety buffer for airport activities and possible aircraft mishaps/fires providing additional emergency landing areas. This important safety feature has been required on many occasions. When aircraft have been in trouble in the past, they have been able to safely land on the golf course . In the future they will have a dramatically reduced "buffer zone", due to proposed factory construction.**

4. Planning.

MAC incorrectly claims the airport is not Green Wedge land as it is outside the State Government Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). However, by definition, all land

outside the UGB is Green Wedge land. Only the fact that the land is Commonwealth land lets MAC evade the requirements of State Government Planning controls

A copy of correspondence from the Department of Sustainability and Environment regarding the Airport and the UGB is attached as Appendix B.[part extracted]

Your submission has been carefully assessed and it is considered that the land occupied by the airport should not be included in the UGB as the land is owned by the Commonwealth Government and is not subject to strategic planning controls. The UGB has therefore been modified to reflect the airport boundary.

Clearly the State Government's initial intention was for the airport to be included in the UGB, however, after the DSE ruling it became zoned Green Wedge.

The State Gov. and the Kingston council have both opposed various developments on the airport land and been thwarted by MAC playing the Commonwealth land veto card

MAC is required , by the Airports Act 1996, to

“...address the extent of consistency with planning schemes in force under a law of the State or Territory the airport is located...”

MAC has clearly not complied with this requirement, ignoring the State Government Planning scheme.

Golf courses are an approved development for green wedge land. Factories are not!

5. Planning controls

5.1 Current status.

No community control. Planning controls are implemented only via Master Plans and as an existing approved Master Plan(eg 2004) is the default position, there is no way of altering emerging undesirable proposals until the Minister approves a new Master Plan

The 2004 Master Plan will continue to remain in force until the 2009 Master Plan is approved by the Minister.

This means, should the Minister not approve the new 2009 Master Plan, MAC can still proceed with it's unwanted development program.

5.2 Need for change

We recognise the difficulty the Federal Government has in balancing airport functions with municipal and residential concerns. However we do not see balance, only loss of public open space & amenity, decreased safety and increased noise. It is incumbent on the Federal Government to rectify the shortcomings of the poorly thought out issue of private leasing of public land, as it applies to secondary airports.

6. Safety

The STMGCG supports the proposition that Moorabbin Airport remains as a functional airport, albeit with substantially more community say in its development. We are however, very concerned about the increasing risk of serious aircraft accidents at Moorabbin Airport and its environs.

6.1 Increased flights.

Clearly, increased numbers of aircraft movements, as foreshadowed by MAC, increases the probability of accidents. Projection of a 30% increase in aircraft movements in the next few years compounds all the problems. The prospect of this already intrusive invasion on the local quality of life becoming even worse, is why our committee is strongly opposed to increased numbers of flights and further commercial development on the airport land which reduces safety.

6.2 Increased pilot training.

Equally clearly, increased pilot training flights markedly increases noise inflicted on our community and the probability of learner type accidents (appendix 3). We recognise that Airports, such as Moorabbin Airport, need a lot of space to conduct pilot training. Building on all available open land in the airport precinct obviously reduces that space. Unfortunately, in past years State and Federal Governments have allowed developers to build houses near the airport.

As the airport has got busier, the number of flights and especially the amount of training flights has grown also. State and Local Government may be able to set guidelines on noise zones for new residential developments, however, due to Commonwealth control, they can do nothing about existing residential area's noise problems.

6.3 Increased 'On Airport' development.

It also follows, if you build on all the open space around an airport you reduce the available open ground for safe emergency landings and significantly increase the chance of a distressed plane landing on a building!

Clause 18.04) seeks *to facilitate the siting of airfields*
The State Planning Policy relating to Airfields (SPPF
and extensions to airfields, restrict incompatible land use and development in the vicinity of airfields, and recognise and strengthen the role of airfields as focal points within the State's economic and transport infrastructure. The Clause states that planning for areas around airfields should:

■ Preclude any new use or development which could prejudice the safety or efficiency of an airfield.

■ *Take into account the detrimental effects of aircraft operations (such as noise) in regulating and restricting the use and development of affected land.*

■ *Preclude any new use or development which could*

prejudice future extensions to an existing airfield or aeronautical operations in accordance with an approved strategy or master plan for that airfield.

Clearly the construction of multiple buildings [factories, warehouses, offices, hotels etc] actually on the airport **MUST** prejudice safety both from an aviation perspective and also for any employees working in such buildings.

The Government and the community should be aware of the potential for a major disaster to occur at Moorabbin. A recent air accident near the airport resulted in the death of a pilot however, while tragic, this could have been far more serious had the plane not crashed into an empty garage but rather had struck a nearby classroom full of school children. While the incidence of aircraft crashes is low it obviously will increase with increased numbers of flights and reduced open space landing zones.

It is not acceptable to wait for a major disaster to address the safety of Moorabbin Airport operations.

MAC should not be allowed to diminish safety at Moorabbin by building over all available land, especially the golf course.

6.4 Windshear Danger

As indicated by the Discussion paper, windshear is always a serious hazard for aviation and is a potential killer. It is usually an on airport problem which can be exacerbated by encroaching development close to the runway. This is exactly what MAC proposes with it's factory /warehouse developments. This HAS to increase the potential for adverse flying conditions, particularly for landing light aircraft.

The 2009 Draft Master plan for Moorabbin Airport does not appear to mention windshear or turbulence in relation to safety.

It should be mandatory to have expert modelling reports for ANY development close to a runway to evaluate possible windshear / turbulence. The developer of the proposed structure should fund such modelling

7 Noise

7.1 General

In regard to the Moorabbin Airport the STMGCG feels that, unlike at large international airports, residents could be relieved from the excessive aircraft noise impact by moving the very noisy, circuit flight training operations to country Victoria. The continuous, repetitive circuits flown by training helicopters,(which have a lower height restriction and hence are noisier), are of particular concern.

Helicopter noise over residential areas is far more intrusive and disturbing than any other aircraft noise.

Over the last few years the helicopter training at Moorabbin Airport has markedly increased, resulting in more noise and for longer periods of time. Weekends and public holidays are the most offensive days when residents are at home and need to rest and enjoy quality time with the family and friends.

7.2. The ANEF System

The Discussion paper correctly points out the limitations of this noise “mapping” system. Many areas of Dingley Village lie in the 20-25 ANEF contour which is graded as ‘conditionally acceptable’. Acceptable to whom? Whose conditions? Certainly not the residents who live under the helicopter training paths! ANEF is not an adequate system for setting acceptable noise levels. Its contour zones can be very rubbery with pilots often ignoring restrictions. This ‘flexibility’ has allowed an increase in aircraft noise to ‘creep’ progressively over the residential areas around the airport.

Recommendations.

8.1. The Golf Course.

The golf course should be **preserved as a matter of urgency and safety**. The delay in the availability 2009 Master Plan has allowed MAC to close the back nine holes in Dec 2008 and to facilitate closure of the rest of the course in May 2009. However, it is quite feasible to return the course to its previous condition.

8.2. Ombudsman.

When the Labour party was in opposition, we know that Senator Kerry O’Brien, Anthony Albanese MP and Simon Crean MP were very supportive of having an Aviation Industry Ombudsman.

Appointment of an independent Aviation Industry Ombudsman would enable impartial investigations, evaluations and reports to the Government on the very important issues that many community groups have in regard to loss of our golf course, noise, safety and reduced environment amenity.

We are aware of many pilots and users of the airport who will not complain about dangerous or poor facilities, inadequate maintenance, unfair rents, safety issues and other grievances because they are afraid of being victimised by MAC.

8.3 Safety.

We strongly recommend

(a) Reducing proposed development of remaining open space around the airport runways and especially on the golf course, to maintain safety buffers for emergency landings.

(b) Urgently relocate basic pilot training, including helicopter training, to more rural airports.

(c) Requiring any remaining training circuits to avoid residential areas.

8.4. Planning Control

We have the support of the Victorian Government Minister for Planning and the Kingston Council concerning the need for proper Airport planning controls, the appropriateness of the golf course as a suitable use of land in this green wedge zone and the inappropriateness of some of MACs proposed commercial and industrial developments on the airport land.

Clearly, the only practical solution to this unsatisfactory existing situation is for Minister Albanese to immediately introduce legislation to cede planning control of Federal Secondary Airports land to State and Local Governments.

This would finally allow local communities to have some really meaningful input into airport development and their own environments.

9. Summary

At Moorabbin Airport we have a situation where private aviation enterprises, in particular flying schools, unwanted development and inappropriate businesses are protected by Commonwealth land control rules, regardless of what the community, State Government, Statutory Organisations, Local Councils or affected residents want.

We believe Moorabbin is not the only secondary airport to have these problems; however we do believe the situation at Moorabbin is most serious and has given rise to a large number of public complaints about the loss of an excellent public golf course, the loss of open space increased aircraft noise, **decreased safety** and many other problems, at this regional airport.

We support that Moorabbin Airport remains as a functional airport, albeit with much more community say in its development. We recognise the difficulty the Federal

Government has in balancing airport functions with municipal and residential concerns. However we do not see balance, only loss of public open space & amenity , increased noise and **decreased safety**.

We support the Government in its endeavour to improve dialogue between affected communities and airport operators to better manage the impact of airport development.

The only practical solution to this unsatisfactory existing situation is for **Minister Albanese to immediately introduce legislation to cede planning control of Federal Secondary Airports land to State and Local Governments**.

Without meaningful change , there will be continued, escalating conflict between a rapacious developer, protected by The Commonwealth, and many, adversely affected instrumentalities, organisations and residents.

10. Appendix

1. Standing Committee on Petitions. Acknowledging tabling of STMGCG petition
2. Coles Pty. Ltd. Letter of intent to build a significant shopping complex at Moorabbin Airport in 2010
3. Most recent training accident at Moorabbin Airport.

Any text which is not 14 times New Roman has been inserted from other documents, for the purpose of explanation.

Appendix 1: Standing Committee on Petitions. Acknowledging tabling of STMGCG petition.



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

PO Box 6021, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600 | Phone: (02) 6277 4670 | Fax: (02) 6277 4627 | Email: petitions.committee.reps@aph.gov.au

16 September 2008

Mr David Madill
2 Mungari Street
Dingley VIC 3172

Dear Mr Madill

I write with regard to a petition recently submitted for the Committee's consideration regarding Moorabbin Public Golf Course, where you were identified as the principal petitioner.

As you know, the petition was presented in the House on 26 May 2008 and referred to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. A response from the Minister was presented in the House yesterday and I am pleased to enclose a copy for your information. It can also be viewed on the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/petitions/infrastructure.htm>.

The petition was one of several considered at a public hearing in Canberra on 1 September 2008. I have enclosed a copy of a document presented at that meeting for your information. The proof transcript of this public hearing is available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/petitions/roundtables/transcript1sept2008.pdf>.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in petitioning the House of Representatives. We will advise you if any further action is taken. Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the secretariat.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Towner'.

Joanne Towner
Secretary

Appendix 2: Coles Pty. Ltd. Letter of intent to build a significant shopping complex at Moorabbin Airport in 2010.

6 February 2009

Mr TJ Uren
4 Brownfield Street
MORDIALLOC 3195

Dear Mr Uren

Thank you for your letter addressed to Richard Goyder regarding the development of a Coles Supermarket in Moorabbin.

Our National Property Team have confirmed that we will be erecting a Coles Supermarket on the corner of Boundary and Centre Dandenong Roads in Moorabbin, scheduled for 2010. This complex will also incorporate a Kmart, 1st Choice Liquor outlet and Office Works.

When selecting sites for our stores, we take a number of factors into consideration including the available food market, existing supermarket competition and our existing store network. The site must also be designed in a manner to provide the best customer offer in terms of store layout and centre design; i.e. car parking and customer convenience.

We believe this will be a successful location for our business, and that the local community will benefit.

I appreciate your feedback, and appreciate you taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely



Ian McLeod
Managing Director

Ref. C071853580 IM:kmcso

Appendix 3: Newspaper report of most recent trainee pilot crash landing 3rd June 2009.



Plane lands in a ditch

A STUDENT pilot escaped unharmed when his light plane careered off the runway at Moorabbin airport on Friday.

Police and ambulance crews were called to the airport just before 2.30pm.

Airport manager Phil McConnell said the Cessna 150 was being flown by a lone student pilot.

"(The pilot) looks to have made a hard landing and gone off the edge of the runway," Mr McConnell said.

The pilot was uninjured in the crash.

The plane landed in a ditch near a boundary fence at the airport.

The incident was reported to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

The plane after an accident involving a trainee pilot at Moorabbin airport.

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