

## SAVE THE MOORABBIN GOLF COURSE GROUP

The Officer in Charge,  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government,  
P.O. Box 594,  
CANBERRA ACT 2601.

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Re Save the Moorabbin Golf Course Group submission to The National Aviation Policy Green Paper.**

The Save the Moorabbin Golf Course Group made a submission to the Issue Paper in June 2008 in regard to the Moorabbin Airport Corporation [ MAC] activities and the likely loss of Kingston's only 18 hole Public Golf Course, as well as the detrimental effects MAC's non aviation developments will have on the 100,000 or more people living around the perimeter of the airport. [ appendix 1]

Background.

The original 99 year lease from the Commonwealth Government was signed by Moorabbin Airport Corporation [ MAC] on June 1998 for approximately \$10 million dollars. MAC is 66.6% owned by Goodman Holdings which is controlled by Mr.Patrick Goodman who is also a non executive director of the Goodman Group, property developers. Goodman Group already owns and manages Chifley Business Park, a relatively new industrial estate, situated on approximately 30 hectares of the airport land [ less than 10% of the airport area]. It was valued at \$101 million dollars on 30/6/2008 [Goodman's annual report].

City of Kingston signed a 10 year lease with MAC for use of the golf course in November 1998.

According to the current [2004] Master Plan, MAC intends to build factories, offices, retail developments and warehouses over most 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 feel that the Green Paper has not adequately addressed the loss of Public amenity, noise, safety and environmental issues which are certain consequences of the unwanted non aviation we have clearly detailed.

At Moorabbin Airport we have a situation where private aviation enterprises, unwanted development and inappropriate businesses are protected by Commonwealth land control rules, regardless of what the community, State Government, Statutory Organisations [appendix 3] or Local Councils say. We believe Moorabbin is not the only secondary airport to have these problems.

We are pleased we have the support of the Victorian Government Minister for Planning and the Kingston Council re the need for proper planning controls and the appropriateness of the golf course as a suitable use of land in this green wedge zone and the inappropriateness of any further industrial development on the land.[appendix 4]

## **Reasons for preserving the existing Moorabbin Golf Course.**

### **GOLF RELATED**

- a) This is the only 18 hole public golf course in the city of Kingston.
- b) To replace it will 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 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 the growing numbers of older golfers who play regularly.
- g) It is 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.

### **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 peoples budgets.
- c) Acts as a safety buffer for airport activities and possible aircraft mishaps/fires providing additional emergency landing areas.

### **PUBLIC AMENITY**

- a) Acts as a visually attractive buffer to break up the commercial/industrial areas which almost surround the airport.
- b) It is public green open space, a commodity in short supply!!
- c) It is in the Green Wedge zone and should remain undeveloped. There are already too many non aviation and non green wedge uses on the airport.
- d) There are many bird species dependant on the course for sanctuary & food.
- e) With its many native trees, it is a carbon sink for greenhouse gas reduction [compared with the alternative of factories & buildings which will increase them].
- f) Loss of the course to commercial development will result in increased traffic congestion on ALL surrounding roads, increased noise, visual and actual pollution for local residents and a generally less pleasant living environment.
- g) The council will lose its works depot currently in the course grounds.
- h) The course now functions as a floodwater retention basin and the southern section will continue to do so and will not be able to be built on anyway.

## Recommendations to address the problems

1. Immediately suspend all further development of any kind until the current review of the Master Plan has been completed. This is vital. The failure to suspend development , prior to this time, has already resulted in the closure of 9 holes of the golf course at the expiration of the lease. Unfortunately Minister Albanese has no power to do this[ appendix 5].
2. State & Local government MUST be given planning controls over the airport land. The current manager/developer [ MAC & Goodman Group] has not consulted with Council, local organizations or residents in any meaningful way, because these groups have no authority. This has led to proposed developments being thrust on the community which are opposed by the State government, Kingston Council and many resident groups and individuals.

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. The Green Paper now makes NO mention of creating this independent Office. An independent Aviation Industry Ombudsman would be able to investigate, evaluate and report to the Government on the very important issues that the community has in regard to loss of our golf course, noise, safety and reduced environment amenity.

### **Specific Responses to the Green Paper:-**

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

We support the Government in its endeavour to improve dialogue between the affected communities and airport operators to better manage the impact of airport development. So far the dialogue and consultation effort, between the operators and the communities, has been entirely ineffective. The operators, politicians, CASA and ASA have largely ignored all complaints. An Ombudsman would be invaluable in improving this unsatisfactory situation.

The Master Plan system is NOT working, the promised community consultation is NOT working and we at the Save the Golf Course Group are living proof of these failures.

Problems caused by the existing Master Plan include....

Immediate loss of Kingston's only 18 hole Public golf course.

Loss of a large area of public open space.

Decreased aviation safety for pilots, workers and residents.

By leasing airport land and approving Master Plans, the Commonwealth has given up virtually all control over its own airport properties, allowing developers to proceed , unchecked and with impunity, against the wishes of all other interested parties. We urge the Commonwealth to seriously address the problem of MAC running rampant over our green wedge land.[ appendix 5]

With respect to the use of airport land cited in the Green Paper, if Moorabbin Airport is allowed to grow, as MAC wishes, there will be an airport covered with buildings and bitumen with two narrow take off and landing runways and almost no open space. With an estimated aircraft movement of 400,000 to 450,000 per year, it's not hard to imagine what this will do to Public open space, quality of life, airport safety and traffic congestion in and around the airport.

Those of us that live in the area are already feeling the inconvenient pressure of huge "B Double" trucks clogging and damaging[?] the roads that were never designed or built to take such a load.

The prospect of this invasion on the local quality of life becoming even worse is why our committee is so passionate in opposing further development.

It is completely unacceptable and unfair to the community that a profit driven property developer is able to...

- a) Ignore the State Government Green Wedge legislation, which was specifically enacted to preserve public open space.
- b) Disregard the City of Kingston's objections to various existing and proposed retail developments (which the Council believes would be better built to service newer residential areas of the City).
- c) Destroy an excellent 18 hole public golf course ( which hosts some 60,000 rounds of golf annually) against the wishes of thousands of players/residents ( petition tabled in Parliament 26/5/2008) [ appendix 6]
- d) Bring about the end of the Moorabbin Golf Club which had over 350 members.
- e) Generally degrade the quality of life for thousands of families in the airport environs by increasing traffic noise, density & pollution, decreasing air safety and destroying the existing green open vistas which provide a pleasant alternative to factories.
- f) Acquire a large parcel of public land at a peppercorn lease then develop it at a large profit.

Clearly, the only practical solution to this ridiculous existing situation is for Minister Albanese to immediately introduce legislation to cede planning control of Federal airport land to State and Local Governments. This would obviate the need for any compensation to lease holders but would finally allow local communities to have some really meaningful input into airport development.

We do support the need for an independent Aviation Industry Ombudsman with real powers to address our complaints.

We do not support privately controlled organisations, such as MAC, being able to run roughshod over the wishes and needs of local communities.



David Madill, Chairman, Save the Moorabbin Golf Course Group

25th Feb 2009