

SAVE THE MOORABBIN GOLF COURSE WORKING GROUP

Submission to Parliamentary Petitions Committee 30th Oct. 2008

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, situated on approximately 30 hectares of the airport land, 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.

Federal Government land is not subject to any State Government, State Government statutory bodies or Local government control.

There is to be a Moorabbin Airport Corporation Master plan review in November 2008, called in by the Minister for Planning the Hon A. Albanese.

The Problems caused by the existing Master Plan

- 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.

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) It 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. Failure to suspend development will result in the irreversible destruction of 9 holes of the golf course at the expiration of the lease.

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.

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 the 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)
- 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 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.

David Madill,
Chairman,
Save the Moorabbin golf course working group,