

**At any one time the Belmont Council is working on a range of projects designed to improve the health & well-being of its residents. Part of this process involves community consultation. It needs an informed and responsive citizenry to do this effectively. Part of our role is to monitor this process and provide feedback.**

**Fasten your seatbelts!** The

**“PERTH AIRPORT PRELIMINARY DRAFT MASTER PLAN 2020”** is now available for viewing. Public comment and written submissions are invited and must be lodged by **Friday 18 October 2019**.

Under the Airports Act (1996), which enabled the privatisation of major airports in Australia, Master Plans must be provided to the public every 5 years outlining future development proposals. The commercial property development potential on these large, often **greenfield**, sites has become an integral part of their business plans; a shift from air services to non-aviation, mixed-use centres. Because these areas come under Commonwealth jurisdiction they are not beholden to Local or State Planning controls. This can be problematic for local communities as these sites become more **grey park** than **green field**.

For more information on this trend and the accompanying issues refer to Queensland University of Technology (QUT) link:  
<https://eprints.qut.edu.au/34167/1/c34167.pdf>

**Perth Airport & Precinct** are seen as critical to the economic prosperity of Western Australia.

According to the Draft Master Plan, by the year 2040 the volume of air traffic at Perth Airport is expected to more than double. The ever expanding airport commercial precinct will become a 24 hour a day metropolis (aka ‘airport city’ or ‘aerotropolis’) where everything, including the kitchen sink, will be available on demand. Expect the vehicular traffic to also double.

City of Belmont residents will be waking up in a city that never sleeps!

**“Perth Airport acknowledges that there are communities which are affected by the 24-hour operation of the airport. However, this impact is balanced against the broader community and economic benefit that arises from these operations”,** (Section 1.5, p.27).

So what are some of the adverse impacts on local residents that are to be endured for the ‘greater good’?

**AIR & NOISE POLLUTION.** WA greenhouse emissions per capita are one of the highest in the world, (EPA, State of Environment Report, 2007, p.29). The aviation industry is a significant contributor to these emissions. As indeed is our love affair with the car. The projected dramatic increase in air tourist travel & freight services will further contribute to climate change. This will be the broader community and economic cost that needs to be weighed against the broader benefit from these operations!

In the City of Belmont’s ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2016-2021, it states that “Human-

induced climate change is recognised as a key environmental issue facing the City of Belmont now and into the future” ... “Scientific modelling indicates that the south west of Western Australia, including the City of Belmont will continue to be hard hit by forecast reductions in rainfall, increased temperatures and further reductions in surface and groundwater resources.” P.44

<http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Services/Environment/Documents/Environment%20and%20Sustainability%20Strategy%20-2019%20revision.pdf>

From a local community perspective whilst future, new aircraft may become ‘cleaner & quieter’ the projected increase in the number of flights will further inconvenience residents. It is not just the volume & duration of noise but also the frequency & occurrence of noise events that are of serious concern.

Recent studies from University of Bern indicate that residents ... “who are exposed to noise exceeding **60dB** a day have a **30% higher risk** of dying from heart attacks than people only exposed to 45dB a day. The more aircraft noise you are exposed to and the longer you are exposed, the higher the risk of health issues”. Refer link below.

<https://soundear.com/2018/02/22/aircraft-noise-harmful/>

At Copenhagen Airport noise monitoring stations are located around most of the airport to guarantee precise measuring and to ensure that the noise level of **65dB** is not exceeded.

The monitoring of aircraft noise levels around Perth Airport is

conducted by Airservices Australia, with a total of 6 fixed noise monitors (EMUs) located in the suburbs of Lathlain, Cannington, Guildford, Queens Park, Beechboro and Greenmount. **Yes that’s right; none located in the City of Belmont!**

Lathlain makes do for us and it has the highest spike in events **over 65dB** in October/November when the main runway is closed for maintenance work.

The monitors for Guildford and Queens Park have the highest overall noise levels being at the ends of the main runway, with ‘noise events’ regularly **exceeding 65dB**.

<http://aircraftnoiseinfo.bksv.com/perth-airport/noise-monitoring/>

Maybe it’s time for our local federal member of parliament to revisit the issues of noise insulation schemes for residents and night time curfews?

On the Council’s website (Services-Environment) it states that... “Noise from the movement of aircraft, road and rail traffic is exempt from compliance with the ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (NOISE) REGULATIONS 1997 (normally used to deal with common forms of noise nuisance) and the City of Belmont is generally unable to deal with such issues.”

<http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Services/EnvHealth/Pages/Noise.aspx>

Air pollution will become more significant with increasing volumes of traffic rat-running through local, residential streets. Particulate matter (PM), especially from diesel engine exhaust, has many serious health effects such as respiratory illnesses,

cancer, heart disease and auto-immune system disorders. Recent scientific research suggests that small, fine particulates can adversely impact human health, irrespective of their chemical composition.

Local Councils need to monitor air pollution hotspots and implement protection measures, especially for schools, kindergartens & day care centres on busy roads.

Trucks and other large commercial vehicles should be discouraged from ‘rat running’ through residential areas.

### **NON-AVIATION DEVELOPMENT PLANS.**

In Section 5 (p.102) of the Master Plan the Perth Airport proposes five-year Non-Aviation Development Plans for each of the airport precincts; **Airport West, Airport South, Airport North, and Airport Central**. These 5 year plans support the development of land not required for aviation purposes. In other words their development is for purely commercial gain to their shareholders; not for ‘the broader community and economic benefit’.

Design guidelines for these development plans include; “**sustainable outcomes that create safe, attractive and connected places offering high amenity**” and “**promote environmental and Aboriginal heritage values**”. (p.111)

In the **Airport North Precinct** which borders Guildford Cemetery and includes part of Kalamunda Road there are large areas of very good to excellent quality bushland, and some Aboriginal Heritage sites. (It once

included a lovely, public golf-course, now replaced by a not so lovely, private brickworks – but that’s another story.) North of this area is an expanding residential estate in South Guildford.

The existing bush areas act as a buffer zone as this precinct is directly under the cross and main runway, and the proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> runway, flight paths.

So what form might some of these non-aviation related developments take?

Perhaps a revegetation and restoration of the bush environment under the direction of the Urban Bushland Council would be a welcome, collaborative, development proposal?

Alas what is actually being proposed is a realignment of Kalamunda Road with more access points, and the creation of large, flat sites to support future industrial uses. In addition to this, “...a future fuel storage facility may be developed in Airport North, utilising a possible extension to the existing Midland Freight Rail line.” (Section 5, p.105).

The **Airport West Precinct** contains the domestic passenger terminals, **T3 & T4**. These will remain in use until 2025 when they will be demolished, creating a **new mixed-use zone** for Airport Services/Commercial uses.

The rest of the precinct is categorised as **Commercial Zone**. One of its objectives is “... to provide a suitable interface between the airport boundary and the surrounding areas.” (Section 3, p.74)

Some of the many discretionary uses in this new zone include: Abattoir, Corrective Institution, Dog Kennels,

Fuel depot, Power plant and Waste storage facility.

A decision on retaining the cross runway will be made afterwards, so don't count on those high spikes in 'noise events over 65dB in Lathlain during Oct/Nov' ending anytime soon.

The 'surrounding areas' of this precinct are the suburb of Redcliffe and the City of Belmont's Development Area 6 (DA6), which is focusing on providing medium to high density residential land use close to the soon to be opened 'Redcliffe Train Station'. All aboard!

One DA6 proposal is the creation of a '**living stream**' to replace the existing main stormwater drain that runs from the airport to the Swan River. This 'retrofitting' is an alternative approach to stormwater management that aims to minimise flooding and improve pollutant filtration, before stormwater reaches the river system. The incorporation of swales and artificial swamps, and the reduction of paved surfaces forms part of this approach.

The tree lined section of Brearley Avenue, contained within the Airport West Precinct, could provide the basis for another '**living stream**' (linking to the Fauntleroy Drain) with surrounding carpark areas being reclaimed and revegetated.

The Development plan for this precinct will be commercial, centred around ... "retail, entertainment, leisure and recreation in a high amenity, walkable 'high street' 24/7 setting for the future increasing local residential population ..." (Section 5,

p.107). Let's hope some quiet, passive recreation is included in the mix.

The **Airport Central Precinct**. "It is expected that for the next five years, ad hoc developments will occur on an as-needed basis as approved, in response to market demand. This is likely to include the redevelopment of under-utilised long-term car parks for other uses, such as food and beverage developments and fuel service stations." (Section 5, p.111)

The **repurposing** of under-utilised long-term car parks is welcome news for it provides the opportunity for new buildings to incorporate **roof-top gardens & green walls** in their design; thus mitigating the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. Hopefully by reusing these paved sites there is less compulsion to disturb the remaining remnant bushland elsewhere. This precinct contains a lovely stretch of Banksia woodland along Tonkin Highway (as indeed does Airport West) with the spectacular *Nuytsia floribunda* (a variety of mistletoe known as the Xmas tree) which blooms in December.

However it is unlikely there will be any **repurposing** of under-utilised carparks anytime soon. The Southern Gazette (Sept.19, 2019) recently reported that Perth Airport Corporation made ... "\$33 million profit from car parking fees last year". (*The pay paradise; put up a parking lot!*)

**Airport South Precinct** which abuts Tonkin Highway and the New Runway Project presents similar opportunities to that of the Airport Central Precinct.

The proposed **New Runway Project (NRP)** or Third Runway is part of the **Airfield Precinct** which is not included in these precincts for obvious reasons; but for a summary of the environmental impact refer to the following link:  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/consultations/b626cf8f-23dc-4248-a6ac-b950276332ba/files/e2018-0147-mdp-volume-b-section-11.pdf>

**OUR URBAN FOREST.** According to the council's Standing Committee (Environmental) Meeting held on 25 June 2018, the bushland on Perth Airport controlled land represents **20% of the City of Belmont's urban forest canopy**; or it did a year ago before more trees were cleared for the Costco development.



Site of proposed Costco facility before clearance.

In all the **Airport /Airfield Precincts** the remnant bushland ranges from completely degraded thru to excellent condition. Much of it contains threatened ecological communities of Banksia Woodland.

Overall there are large areas of good to excellent remnant bushland, with small pockets of completely degraded land contained within.

This is an opportunity to revegetate and restore these degraded pockets in

order for the ‘greater good’ of our Banksia Woodland; and more generally our urban forest.

It is definitely **not** a case for clearing more land for non-aviation uses. The City of Belmont already contains many cleared vacant, under-utilised and unleased commercial sites ripe for non-aviation development! As indeed do other councils abutting airport controlled land.

**SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS.** In Section 3.4, (p.75) of the Master Plan two future land uses have been proposed which are considered ‘sensitive’ – **Education and Hospital.**

Sensitive developments are not permitted at Commonwealth leased airports except in exceptional circumstances and require Commonwealth approval.

The rationale for an exemption in this case is that the Airport West Precinct presents a large parcel of land close to several transport options which would be ideal for a **tertiary hospital** (combining both future land uses). This type of development would generate many trips and place added stress on parking and traffic congestion, though it might be welcome for local patients. Perhaps the Golden Gateway Precinct in Ascot would be a better site?

Usually there is a reason why some developments are considered sensitive and not appropriate in such locations.

It would be rather ironic for local residents suffering health issues (caused by proximity to the airport) to be sent to an airport hospital for treatment and rehabilitation.

The City of Belmont has already given ‘in principle’ support for these sensitive land uses.

### **Upcoming Local Elections.**

BRRAG has now conducted interviews with a number of candidates for the upcoming council elections. Recordings of these can be accessed on the following site:

<http://www.brrag.org.au>

### **Special Electors Meeting.**

As a result of a BRRAG petition containing over 100 signatures a Special Electors’ Meeting (SEM) was held at the City of Belmont Civic Centre on Monday 16 September 2019. This meeting was requested for the purpose of discussing live streaming of Council Meetings; and access to the CEO’s Contract.

The first Electors’ Motion:

1. That Council agrees to the audio livestreaming of all public meetings of Council including the Agenda Briefing Forum, the Ordinary Council Meeting and any Special Meetings or Electors’ Meetings.
2. The recordings are to commence within three months of the motion being carried.
3. That these recordings are made available to the residents of Belmont free of charge on the City of Belmont website.
4. The BEXB45 Policy to be amended removing the copyright on the recordings of meetings including any reference to the Elected Members and supervision.

The second Electors’ Motion:

That Council direct that the CEO provides a copy of his contract, on the same terms as the requirement prior to the amendment of s5.94(t) of the *Local*

*Government Act 1995* (the Act) as it was requested on 30th April 2019, before the amendment to the *Act*.

Both motions were passed by an overwhelming majority of electors at the meeting. These decisions will now be considered at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council, or, if that is not practicable, at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.

### **Recommended reading:**

Adam Smith: What He Thought, and Why it Matters. Jesse Norman, Allen Lane (Penguin) Press, 2018.

**Your feedback.** If you would like to submit an article that is relevant to the residents of Belmont, or you would like to join our group, refer contact details below.