



HON NEIL THOMSON MLC
Shadow Minister for Planning; Lands & Heritage
Member for Mining & Pastoral

Hon Peter Foster MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council Committee Office
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

By email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au.

Dear Mr Foster

Submission - Petition No. 035 – East Subiaco A-Class Reserve

I tabled Petition No. 035 – East Subiaco A-Class Reserve in the Legislative Council on 17 November 2021 and I am pleased to provide further information to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs (Committee) pursuant to the Legislative Council's Standing Orders.

I understand the Standing Committee may not choose to consider this matter due to timing, but I ask, given there continues to be considerable public interest in the matter in the community that my points be considered by the committee.

The tension between development and existing residents in inner metropolitan areas is common and the significant concerns of those people can be overlooked as “routine” objections. In this instance there is considerable substance to the concerns of the petitioners, with some being supported by the City of Subiaco. The two that are of particular concern related to active playing space and traffic management, particularly as the area will see significant movement of vulnerable school children.

The availability of active playing fields is the second key issue. It is not uncommon for inner suburbs to struggle for active playing space as population density rises, often with little opportunity to retrofit these spaces without significant cost to the taxpayer through acquisition of what is normally high value land.



In this instance the State Government has the opportunity for a generational uplift in active playing fields, noting the Oval itself is heritage listed and the function is specified. The draft Master Plan fails to recognise the opportunity presented to increase the active playing fields and allocate the required 1.73h of land required to address this baseline shortfall – noting higher amounts will be preferable. This omission is to the detriment of both the local and the regional communities, and will have long term ramifications for residents who may need to travel to other locations for access to playing fields.

Transport safety is another concern that needs to be considered. The configuration of Hay Street and Roberts Road are suboptimal for the predicted traffic volumes associated with the increased density and the inclusion of a school in the precinct. Given the value and volume of development activity, it would seem opportune to further investigate the City of Subiaco's call to pursue the two-way configuration for Hay Street and Roberts Road and giving further consideration to the potential offered by capping the railway reservation.

Other matters include the failure of the draft Master Plan to align with the City's Local Planning Strategy, including setting aside land for a cultural space of regional significance.

Further, I have sympathy for the petitioners concerns in relation to the scale and form of the built form and the context of the urban landscape. In discussion with the petitioners, they cited the lack of support of aspects of the Master Plan during the consultation period which underpinned their desire to bring their voice to parliament through a petition.

The City also noted on page 19 their Council Minutes for the meeting held on 22 September 2020, that a key concern relates to the unlimited building height afforded to some areas of the precinct. Unlimited building height is not supported due to the limited certainty it provides to key stakeholders.

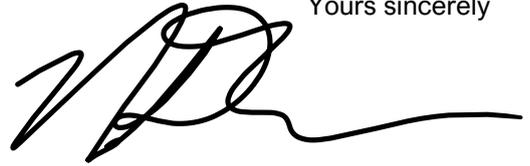
It is the interaction of the built form and purpose of those buildings that is of greatest concern to many residents. The interaction of schools and licenced premises seems counter not only to good planning but to common sense from both a safety and alcohol education perspective. The overlooking is a further problem for the school. Whilst "eyes on the street" have long been seen to improve safety, the period of observation is normally brief. With this proposal, the overlooking could enable long term observation of arrival and departure times and the identification of periods of vulnerability which create an unacceptable risk for both staff and students. The common use of telescopes in high rise residential buildings may normalise the unacceptable observation of children in the school yard, whether for innocent or nefarious purposes.

I have a deep appreciation of the challenges associated with the Master Planning process for urban infill through my former roles as Secretary of the Western Australian Planning Commission and Chief of Staff to the Minister for Planning. I am also a strong supporter of intelligent density to accommodate our growing population, but not where this creates increased risk for our vulnerable cohorts such a children.



It is for this reason that I support this petition and encourage the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs to consider a risk based review of the proposed Master Plan to ensure that we are creating safe, active and engaged communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Thomson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon Neil Thomson MLC
Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region

