

## **Submission opposing the proposed Wave Park on Tompkins Park/Alfred Cove.**

A recent seminar, 'Sustainable Built Environments' organized by the UNAA,<sup>1</sup> provided evidence to support our claim that the proposed Wave Park and its location are unsustainable and inappropriate. The speakers were:

- Professor Joseli Macedo, Head of School of Built Environment, Curtin University, discussing the topic 'The Ecology of Cities: Can SDG11 Deliver Sustainable Built Environments?',
- Mr Martin Spencer, City of Melville Senior Strategic Urban Planner, discussing the topic 'Engagement, Education and Planning – A Strategic Approach to Sustainable Density Increase' and
- Dr Josh Byrne, environmental scientist, television presenter, research academic, and Director of Josh Byrne & Associates, discussed sustainable housing.

Prof. Macedo addressed the UN goal that calls for built environments that are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and which requires developers and planners to be good stewards of the environment in their creation of urban spaces.<sup>2</sup> Planners must take account of housing, transport, heritage, natural and man-made disasters, green spaces, viewsapes, and environmental impacts.<sup>3</sup> Her international perspective provides compelling reasons why the Wave Park proposal must not become a reality, at least not in the Tompkins Park/Alfred Cove location. Prof Macedo reminds us that beautiful, significant and iconic viewsapes such as that across Tompkins Park and Melville Water to Perth's CBD must be preserved.<sup>4</sup> The connection of Perth's Indigenous people to the environment must be protected, yet we have not seen any sign that indigenous people have been consulted on this proposal, despite City of Melville (CoM) policies requiring respect for aboriginal heritage within its boundaries.<sup>5</sup>

Despite initiatives the CoM has previously taken to mitigate environmental impacts of urban development, with this proposal, we see the City preparing to override its own environmental policies. Melville City is well placed in regard to green spaces, a record to be to be maintained, and not sacrificed to commercial interests and proposals such as the wave park. Prof. Macedo reminds us that to be good stewards of our environment, we must maintain urban diversity, wetlands, urban wildlife and urban vegetation. Green cities are healthy, sustainable, biophilic, and integrated into the natural environment. Much work has gone into protecting and enhancing the Alfred Cove environment - we must maintain its biodiversity and unique natural environments. Urban natural environments must allow all the people, including and especially children, to engage with nature, it must be free and we need a lot of it. Environments must be rich, they must smell and feel (and sound) like nature, and they must not be Disneyfied or plasticized. Placing a wave park/fun park on Tompkins Park would do exactly that. Engagement with the environment does not have to be active to be beneficial, it certainly does not need to be 'activated' as the wave park proponent claims. Such a wave park would not be free, and it would cater to a demographic

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Built Environments' organized by the UNAA, Lotteries House, Perth, 27 September 2017.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations: Sustainable Development Goal 11.

<sup>3</sup> Macedo 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Macedo 2017. Precinct 5.

<sup>5</sup> Macedo 2017. CoM Indigenous heritage policy.

which is not representative of the local population, despite the proponent's declaration to the contrary.

The Wave Park Group's plan shows that the proposed site for the wave park is totally unsuitable for the following reasons:



Wave Park Group Site Plan 4.<sup>6</sup>

- It alienates for a small segment of the population iconic views to the city and a significant area of public open space replacing it with an industrial landscape.
- It creates congestion on important transport links.
- It commercializes, 'Disneyfies' and 'plasticizes' an important semi-natural environment
- It replaces the natural contours of land and vegetation with harsh and unsympathetic lines of buildings and retaining walls.
- It replaces natural land surfaces with asphalt for parking, and concrete and plastic for water storage.
- It will replace the natural lines of vegetation facing the river with an extensive concrete retaining wall.
- It will replace fresh air with chlorine-permeated air and the smells of food.
- It will replace the sounds of wind, water and birdsong with loud music, heavy pumps and machinery and the shouts of crowds.
- There are no, or inadequate, buffer zones to separate the proposed facility from surrounding landscapes.

Prof. Macedo reminds us too that we can't prevent natural and man-made disasters, but we can plan for them, manage risks, and restore community infrastructure after they happen.<sup>7</sup> Geoscience Australia has prepared a manual on Geo-Hazards<sup>8</sup> which must be referred to by

<sup>6</sup> Wave park Group Business Case, *Wave Park Group – Surf Sports Recreation and Leisure Facility, Tompkins Park Business Case Final 29 November 2016*, Appendix 1. Site plans 1-4, pp 22-24.

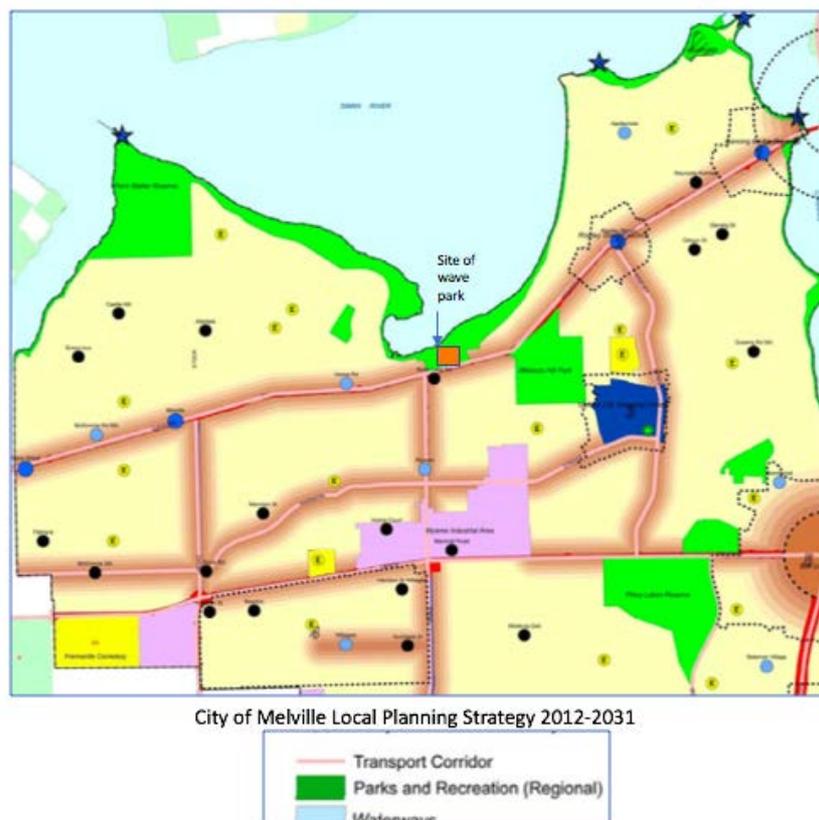
<sup>7</sup> Macedo 2017.

<sup>8</sup> T Jones, M Midelman, N Corby, *Natural Hazard risk in Perth Western Australia, Comprehensive report*, Geoscience Australia. 2005. Departments: BOM, P and I D o E, Land Informations systems. [www.ga.gov.au/webtemp/image\\_cache/GA6523.pdf](http://www.ga.gov.au/webtemp/image_cache/GA6523.pdf).

anyone considering a major development, such as that proposed for the Tomkins Park site, in order to assess its vulnerability to the geo-hazards of floods, severe storms, strong winds, heat waves, bushfires and earthquakes. We see no sign in the business case that this manual has been consulted.

The Melville official Mr Martin Spencer spoke of plot ratios, so he must also be familiar with buffer zones, yet there is no allowance for this on the wave park proposal.<sup>9</sup> He also spoke of the Council's desire to encourage community-government partnerships, yet the Council is ignoring the persistent voice of the community in the current debate. He spoke of 'friendly spaces', of developers earning the right to build, and giving back to the community, of 'sensitive' urban design' and streetscapes, yet the wave park proposal stridently contradicts these concepts in its plan to create a noisy, smelly and environmentally unsound industrial landscape which will have to be endured by local residents and others who pass through the area.

City of Melville's own 'Strategic Approach Map' (see portion below), on which I have superimposed the approximate position and dimensions of the proposed wave park, places the proposal in a broader context and clearly shows why the proposed development must not proceed.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Macedo 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Spencer, 2017.

- The Wave Park would be squeezed between a major artery (Canning Highway) and a section of the Swan River, which includes the unique Alfred Cove/Swan River Marine Park.
- There are no buffer zones between the facility and the highway, the nearby residential areas and the river.
- There is no road access from one point of the compass (in this case north) increasing the risks of traffic congestion.
- It creates a major interruption to the green space linkage along the Swan waterway.
- It alienates a significant (and precious) amount of riverfront public open space and foreshore vegetation.
- Its noxious outputs, effluent, noise, artificial light and smells (food and chlorine) are likely to have a significant effect on local bird life, extending over year-round long operating hours.
- There is a risk of major environmental upheaval should there be a significant leak of chlorinated water into the confines of Alfred Cove.

Dr Byrne reminds us that ‘investor profit motives compromise the planning process’, of which we have ample proof in flawed process being followed by the City of Melville in this shameful saga.<sup>11</sup> Dr Byrne points out that Perth’s groundwater supply has been extensively studied, so we know what pressure our supplies are under, 50% of Perth’s water being desalinated sea water, and yet the Wave Park Group proposes to use our already overtaxed ground water supply for an entirely frivolous and inappropriate project. Further, the concepts of ‘culture and context’ must be inherent in every development initiative, yet we see a proposal to place an amusement park in a location which is totally out of context, and which is designed to cater for a culture which is out of keeping with a residential environment that includes public open space, riverfront foreshore and the Alfred Cove Class A wetland reserve.

Government authorities must use every power at their disposal to prevent this outrageous proposal from becoming a reality.

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<sup>11</sup> Dr Josh Byrne, environmental scientist, television presenter, research academic, and Director of Josh Byrne & Associates. 27 September 2017.