

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Whose Airport is It?

Associate Professor Donald McNeill from the Urban Research Centre is exploring modern airport configuration and design and its effect on airport stakeholders through a three year Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery project.

'The contemporary airport is now a complex megastructure which often derives as much of its income from commercial activities as from its core air-travel related functions' says Associate Professor McNeill. 'The restructuring of Australian airports has become a major issue of public interest in recent years, given their status as 'critical infrastructure' under Australian National Research Priorities. This project will explore how airport territory is being reconfigured through economic value-adding strategies, and chart the emergence of international standards in airport development and design. It will critically evaluate the impact of these strategies on existing urban governance, planning and development, particularly from the perspective of groups affected by airport expansion.'

Associate Professor McNeill and an ARC funded PhD student will use local case studies and detailed examinations of the processes and practices in play at different airport locations. This will allow the team to explore and specify differing models of urbanism occurring in specific airport contexts in Australia, South East Asia and Europe. The team will also look at how various administrative bodies such as local councils or central and regional governments regulate and plan for airport growth, and deal with conflicts, competition and contestation that can occur. This will lead to an interpretation of how operating activities and processes, especially those



involving economic value-adding such as retail outlets, catering, and public services, are integrated or separated from the surrounding city or metropolitan region in which the airport is located.

This project will provide strong practical evidence and theoretical framework about how restructuring of the modern airport affects users, businesses, governments and the community, and will thus expand our understanding of the impact of airports on urban governance and theory worldwide.

Project Title: The production and contestation of airport territory

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Contact Details: d.mcneill@uws.edu.au,
<http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchcentres/urbanresearchcentre>

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