

# Rosalie carpark fury swells

• From page 7

“Without better public transport and parking infrastructure in the precinct, more and more ordinary health workers will miss out on parking and the impact on surrounding communities will be greater, as health workers look for alternative places to park.”

Billie Giles-Corti, director of the Centre for the Built Environment and Health in UWA's School of Population Health, said the proposal raised several concerns.

“In all my talks locally, nationally and internationally, I showcase Rosalie Park as the epitome of good design that caters for multiple users: sports people, walkers, dog owners and parents with children,” she said.

“It's obvious that sport

and recreational public open space is vital infrastructure that needs to be protected.”

Mental health and environmental pollution considerations also needed to be taken into account, she said.

“There is mounting evidence that exposure to nature is restorative - reducing stress, aggression and mental fatigue - and even just looking out on to green space protects mental health,” she said.

“People meet their neighbours in public open space and social networks also protect it.

“This is not only good for individuals, but also for the community. However, converting two hectares of Rosalie Park into nearly 900 car bays completely changes the nature and attractiveness of that space.

“As the city moves to intensifying the way we use land, we need more public open space rather than less.”

Several studies had shown that people living on or near (up to 300m away) a busy road were at high risk of exposure to pollutants such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide, Ms Giles-Corti said.

“It's ironic that public open space was initially designed to be the ‘lungs’ of polluted industrial cities in Britain and the US, but under this proposal we will be choking the local community with the air pollution generated by the start-up of 900 vehicles,” she said.

“There is a solution: provide more public transport. This will not only be good for the environment, but also for health.”