



REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

**INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF THE CBD AND SOUTH
EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT**

Monday 20 August 2018

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thank you for your time and for your very detailed submission. We appreciate you coming along today. I wanted to ask first: Did the Small Business Commissioner ever advocate to Randwick City Council to provide rate relief for small businesses along the route?

Ms SHUREY: Yes, and we have offered rate relief to residents if they have asked for it. To date I am not sure how many have taken that offer up.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Was that because the Small Business Commissioner advocated to you directly, something that came up within your business support liaison officer or from direct representations to the council?

Ms SHUREY: I do not think I can answer that. I am not sure if they came to us directly or how that was implemented.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Would you mind taking that on notice?

Ms SHUREY: Yes, sure.

In 2015 Council under its own initiative scoped the possibility of offering rate relief for businesses along the light rail alignment. After a comprehensive review it was decided that there was not an equitable way to undertake such an initiative.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You are saying that in your capacity as the manager of strategic planning the Small Business Commissioner has not engaged with you in any way for three years?

Mr BRIGHT: I can say that safely, yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Could you provide to me on notice whether they are meeting regularly with your business support liaison officer or someone else, that would be useful?

Mr BRIGHT: Okay.

Although not directly dealing with Mr Bright, a representative from the Office of the Small Business Commissioner did attend several of the early Randwick Light Rail Working Group Meetings until approximately mid-2015. After then business advisors from the NSW Government Small Biz Connect Program - affiliated with the Office of the Small Business Commissioner - did regularly visit businesses along the Light Rail alignment in Kingsford and Kensington and did regularly contact Council's Economic Development Officer.

Council also worked with representatives from the Eastern Suburbs Business Enterprise Centre (ESBEC) initially and following a change of government contract, Realise Business, who have both undertaken the Small Biz Connect Program and the Light Rail Business Support within the Randwick Council area on behalf of the Office of the Small Business Commissioner. Through these partnerships the Small Biz Bus offering free business advice was placed into the Kingsford Town Centre on three occasions.

Randwick Council hosted comprehensive free Business Skills Workshops and Seminars provided by ESBEC and then Realise Business on approximately four occasions during 2016, seven times during 2017 and five times in 2018 finishing at the end of the financial year in June. Council's Economic Development Officer has regularly seen and conversed with representatives of the Office of the Small Business Commissioner at the quarterly Light Rail Business Reference Group meetings and the quarterly public Light Rail information sessions held in Randwick City.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: My understanding is that that study showed that the

light rail will carry fewer people with longer travel times than the existing bus services; is that accurate?

Mr BRIGHT: I would have to take that on notice, to be honest. That report was commissioned in 2016. I could not answer that question.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Okay. I am happy for you to take it on notice and come back to us because I think this is a key question for the inquiry. There has been incredible disruption for small businesses and for residents, particularly within Randwick City Council but also across the City of Sydney. If this project after \$2.1 billion will actually provide fewer services than the existing capacity then you really have to wonder what the purpose of the project was.

Mr BRIGHT: I will take that on notice.

EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) was engaged by Randwick City Council to undertake a future Light Rail station and system capacity analysis to identify capacity requirements for the future public transport commuter services in the Anzac Parade corridor (through Kensington and Kingsford town centres).

The EMM report used 2011 as a 'base year' for calculating existing transport capacity. The year 2011 was chosen as when the report was written in 2016, 2011 was the most recent year for which the ABS Census journey to work travel information was available.

The EMM report estimated public transport capacity and demand for both 2020 (the first full year of operations for the light rail) and 2031 (the year the light rail frequency is scheduled to increase).

The EMM report used **2011** bus timetables and the typical maximum capacity (of 60 passengers) for a standard bus to calculate the Anzac Parade corridor's existing public transport capacity in the city-bound direction during peak hour. **This was calculated to be 4,800 passengers per hour.**

For calculating the public transport capacity and demand in **2020**, the report assumes the Light Rail system is operating at the TfNSW proposed initial frequency for the Anzac Parade route which is one tram every 8 minutes (7.5 trams per hour) in each direction. This provides interim peak hour passenger capacity for the Light Rail system of **3,495 passengers per hour** in each direction, based on the proposed design capacity of 466 persons per tram.

For calculating the public transport capacity and demand in **2031**, the report assumes the future Light Rail system is operating at the TfNSW proposed maximum frequency for the Anzac Parade route with one tram every 6.5 minutes (9.23 trams per hour) in each direction. This would provide a future maximum peak hour capacity for the Light Rail system of **4,300 passengers per hour** in each direction, based on the proposed design capacity of 466 persons per tram.

The EMM report states:

"It is a significant concern that the proposed Light Rail system capacity will actually be lower than the capacity of the existing peak hour bus services which are currently using Anzac Parade and Todman Avenue and the future corridor public transport system will effectively be operating at full capacity from the commencement of operations in 2019. This will require a significant number of existing peak hourly bus services (mainly the existing express bus service) to be retained if the system is to provide adequate public transport capacity for all the relevant areas of Randwick LGA in the future."

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: No. But we have no reason to disbelieve that the word "several" means what it plainly means. The development agreement for the Sydney light rail project is the key document between Randwick City Council and Transport for NSW. It is a very comprehensive document.

Ms SHUREY: Yes. It was developed to try to mitigate some of the impacts.
The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Indeed. This is the executed version of the agreement. Has this been subject to any variation over its term?

Ms SHUREY: It has not been adhered to.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: With respect to not being adhered to—to use your words—can you give an example?

Ms SHUREY: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: That is fine.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The businesses are impacted. How many shopfront businesses are there on the route to the Randwick council area?

Mr BRIGHT: I could not tell you. I would have to take that on notice.

There are approximately 292 shopfront businesses in total along the Kingsford/Kensington Anzac Parade Light Rail alignment and the Randwick/Alison Road alignment.

Scoping works started on the footpaths in the Kensington and Kingsford town centres and along the Randwick alignment in 2015.

Construction works with initial partial removal and then full removal of the on-street parking along Anzac Parade began in the Kensington Town Centre in May 2016.

Construction works with full removal of the on-street parking along Anzac Parade began in the Kingsford Town Centre in August 2016.

A survey of shopfront businesses by trading name and street address was undertaken by Randwick Council in March 2015 for baseline pre construction data and then surveyed post construction in May 2017 and again in May 2018.

Kensington Town Centre – 120 shopfront businesses

Between March 2015 - May 2018, thirty six (36) shopfront businesses in Kensington that had been open for business in the period between March 2015 and May 2018 ceased trading during that time.

This equates to a 31% turnover in shopfront tenants.

Between March 2015 and May 2018 the shopfront vacancy rate in Kensington changed from 10% to 24%.

Kingsford Town Centre – 160 shopfront businesses

Between March 2015 – May 2018, fifty one (51) shopfront businesses in Kingsford that had been open for business in the period between March 2015 and May 2018 ceased trading during that time.

This equates to a 36% turnover in shopfront tenants.

Between March 2015 – May 2018 the shopfront vacancy rate in Kingsford remained low, changing from 3% to 4%.

Randwick/Alison Road - 12 shopfront businesses

The Randwick/Alison Road light rail alignment passes through a small section of the Randwick Junction town centre, at the eastern end of High Street. There are approximately

twelve (12) shopfront businesses along the Randwick alignment as well as multiple medical specialist rooms at 64 and 66 High Street opposite the Prince of Wales Hospital complex.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I think you have mentioned three that have closed.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: That was Kensington.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I want the whole route in the Randwick council local government area.

Ms SHUREY: There are two separate routes.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Yes. Ms SHUREY: One going along Anzac Parade and the other one going Alison Road.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I want to get the context of whether it is three versus 300 or 3,000.
It would be helpful.

Ms SHUREY: I would have to get back to you on that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I am concerned about the issue and the units overlooking the stabling yard. How many homes are affected directly by that?

There are 50 individual Doncaster Avenue residences (including strata units) adjacent to the Light Rail Stabling Yard.

Ms SHUREY: I would have to take that on notice as well.

How many