

Thank you for inviting me to speak today, and for including the Outer Sydney Orbital in this inquiry. I am not speaking here as a representative of any group, though I have been actively involved with the Outer Sydney Orbital Macarthur Action Group for over 4 years.

The announcement and intended path of the OSO in March 2018 was a complete shock to most locals. Staff from Transport were sent to knock on doors, drop off an envelope, and they were not keen to stay and discuss what was happening. Hundreds of people were confronted with the unexpected future acquisition of their homes and given only a few weeks to assess this large-scale project and make a submission. It is unacceptable to leave people confused and distressed like that, especially without any prior warning that an acquisition was even a remote possibility. No neighbours were notified at all.

There was no expectation of development in this metropolitan rural area. Such a large motorway, 8-lanes, with 2 freight rail lines, would completely change the area and impact us all. Consultations should have begun at the earliest stage with everyone who could potentially be impacted. We should have all have been directly notified of the 2015 consultation – which was unclear and poorly advertised. In 2015 the process of determining the route of the OSO was outlined, consisting of a number of steps including a long list and short list of options for public consultation. This never occurred, with only one final option presented in 2018, an option which did not even appear feasible from an engineering viewpoint. There were also meant to be further community consultations which have not occurred.

There must be full consideration that this is more than a planning exercise, that this seriously impacts people's lives. These are our homes, our livelihoods, our communities, as well as our biggest financial asset. There must be time and assistance for people to understand and assess the proposal and all relevant documents.

Locals read and researched and shared information to help each other try and make sense of what was happening. As we researched, we realised that there were big plans for Western Sydney that locals had been unaware of. However, these plans, including the OSO, had been widely discussed at various industry organisation meetings, where developers, major land holders, and lobby organisations were briefed by government officials and ministers.

After a huge public response, in June 2018 a long tunnel was announced from Cobbitty to Cawdor – despite "long tunnelling required" being said to be a fatal flaw of any corridor option.

Since then, there has been no public communication on the OSO. Landowners were advised they were no longer under threat of acquisition, but no correspondence was sent to many of those who made submissions. There have been no answers to the questions and concerns of the community. There is no report of any type on either the 2015 or 2018 consultations, and the submissions have not been made public. The community is still in limbo, the process unresolved, the threatened gazettal and acquisition has not occurred, there have been no further public consultations. It has been FOUR years. The community does not believe this is over, and the shadow of the OSO is not forgotten. It is impossible for those affected to heal, trust has been destroyed, and rumours of alternate OSO paths persist. There have been life changing, long-term, impacts, it has changed our community, and there has been no support.

I am here to share my experiences, my observations, and my research, with the hope that such a process will never happen again, and that our community may finally get answers. Thank you

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