

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

Name: Mrs Mary Richard

Date Received: 5 July 2018

I am submitting my submission in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the CDB SE Light Rail which is now referred to by many, as the Light Fail. The Terms of Reference applicable to myself are -

"That the Public Accountability Committee inquire into and report on the impact of the construction of the CBD and South East Light Rail Project ("the project") on residents and businesses in the vicinity of the light rail route, including:

a) the adequacy of the government's response to the financial impact and **diminution in social amenity** caused by the project on residents and businesses including access to financial compensation and business support services.

d) ANY OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

By introduction, I am a Randwick resident, Carer, Parent and Grandparent, once proud Sydney sider and now forced activist due to the outrageous, abhorrent annihilation of the green canopy & liveability in the area I loved & my family have always called home.

Sadly due to this 3rd World, unsuitable tram system, myself & my family, many friends & fellow citizens have found that the diminution in our social Amenity has been destroyed now and for many generations to come.

Much of our Social amenity and sense of community can be linked to our connections to our environment and beautiful green spaces in this over crowded and ugly Concrete jungle that Sydney is fast becoming.

Social amenity also includes a sense of belonging and identification with a place and that Special and unique place for me was the complete avenue of Moreton Bay & Port Jackson figs along Anzac Parade. They were planted in the 1860's and added to in 1917 to form a living memorial for our Anzac War Heroes. Not only was the Road name changed (from Randwick Road) at that time but an Oblisk (since moved) was erected and returned soldiers, their families and friends gathered there every Anzac Day to pay respects and honour the memory of fallen & maimed comrades.

This is something that I hold close to my heart as I feel History should and must be preserved at all cost, much the same as has been achieved in England and Europe. From a small child I used to feel a connection to those massive character trees and admired them whenever I accompanied my Mum on the bus into the City .

Later when I waited for my son who attended Sydney Boys High, I often sat under those glorious trees waiting to drive him home, as in those days there was a street from Anzac Parade to Driver Avenue and I could alight from my car and enjoy the beauty & ambience of the Giant Figs and Moore Park.

This unbelievable complete disregard of the exceptional worth & heritage value of those 100 to 150 year old Heritage registered, substantial Fig trees was ignored & resulted in many being destroyed (others will still die due to inconsiderate Light Fail construction causing root damage).

Furthermore several massive Figs were Axed to allow a temporary road diversion to save a paltry 6 months, which now in the light of the current massive incompetence, highlights the appalling criminal act which approved such a plan.

Added to the figs along Anzac Parade were more than 60 weeping figs along Alison Rd that were never supposed to be removed until plans were changed 2 weeks prior to their destruction, to appease ATC interests. Due to this act of barbarism some \$200 million was needed to be spent on a dam to replace the job that the trees fulfilled. Potentially this may block the essential migration of eels to Botany Bay from Centennial Park and possibly damage the eco system.

Many more Moreton Bay figs & Canary Island Palms near Wansey Road (including the exceptional Tree of Knowledge on the cnr of High Street) plus the 100's of other plane trees along the entire route were destroyed.

Distressingly, there is no possibility of size & canopy replacement in the immediate vicinity and those that will be planted will take several generations to reach similar stature.

This bad Governance and process has changed my life and those of so many others in a profound and forever unacceptable way. This will never be forgiven by myself and 100's & 1000's in the Community & is especially even more poignant due to the underhanded manner that our Politicians dismissed the cries of those affected and others who also cared & pleaded for them to "Stop the Carnage"

I and many others stood on Anzac Parade for months and months holding placards, wrote to Politicians, signed petitions, helped organise major rallies, wrote to the media, spent hours on social media, telephoned those responsible, maned information stalls, handed out leaflets, talked to hundreds of people, begged and pleaded for Mike Bairds' Government to alter the route slightly to save all these trees but all our cries fell on deaf ears.

Personally, this forced Activism was at the detriment of my families welfare and special needs. Ultimately it had a very negative affect on my own health which suffered considerably due to the stress, time and effort needed to keep up all those activities. I have experienced anxiety, stress & grief causing severe physical issues needing medical intervention as a result of those massive tree losses.

Sadly the Light Fail debacle has also forced the loss of some of my local Kingsford & Kensington shops which have had to close.

I and others now feel the stress & frustration of trying to park at those remaining shopping strips due to most parking spaces being removed.

Worse still is the danger of navigating the roads due to the traffic congestion and loss of roundabouts, added traffic lights, one way streets and total "No Entry" road closures causing confusion and more frustration for myself & other drivers.

For the last 12 years I have taken my disabled Husband to POW Hospital in Barker Street, every week for essential rehabilitation at 9am. The added traffic chaos due to the closure of High Street (forcing substantial increased traffic on Barker St) has caused extra stress & frustration & has added another 15 - 20 minutes to our drive there. It is now at the point that it is becoming so difficult to continue POW hospital visits that my husband and I often lament that we soon won't be able to continue these appointments though this will negatively affect his health. I hate to think how much worse it will be when the Inglis Development is finished and another 1000 residents will need to use this road.

Where is my social Amenity in this scenario now? I find it extremely difficult to pass any area under construction for the Light Rail, as I am so gutted to see the destruction of my environment which now reminds me of photo's of a war zone. Therefore this now necessitates extra effort and expense to travel the long way around so as to avoid traveling past or too near those areas.

Furthermore, the diminution in social amenity in my and most other residents lives unfortunately is that not only have we had to suffer the loss and damage to 100's & 100's of substantial shade trees but now face extra pollution, substantial traffic chaos & bedlam along most of the route due to stolen traffic lanes and changed traffic conditions. Not only have we lost our local shops & lost our ability to park our cars where they need to be. Having had our relaxing beautiful ambience ripped away we now carry the heavy burden knowing it is all for nothing, as there is, and never will be, any benefit for the local Community.

Added to this, I will have to drive to Anzac Parade Maroubra (I am 5 blocks away) to catch a bus then queue to catch a very slow tram that won't even go where I need to go.

How does this work for us Elderly and disabled, let alone the rest of the local community?

One needs to question the reasoning behind the construction of bits and pieces of track work along the whole route? Why inconvenience 1000's and 1000's of commuters when the sensible policy of good Governance and process, calls for a small section at a time to disrupt as few people as possible.

Personally I believe that this underhanded method arrested the possibility of Stopping the Damn thing from being constructed (notwithstanding the penalty to do so) as due to the whole route having some work happening, this made cancellation difficult.

The amount of money wasted on this doomed project instead of installing a State of the Art Metro line is disappointing, disturbing and frustrating. An initial figure of \$1.6 billion is now \$3.1 billion and climbing.

Imagine this money invested in an underground train line that connected Bondi Junction to Kingsford/Randwick and suburbs beyond including the Airport.

A transport system that would ENHANCE our Environment but not destroy it, unlike the Light Rail.

I believe that the Liberal Party who condoned this unsuitable tram line will be punished severely at the Ballot box due to this lack of Governance and process which allowed such a debacle to take place. Indeed I believe that ICAC should investigate how and why this totally inferior, outdated, dog's breakfast of a transport system was ever quickly approved (by Gladys B) when so many Experts and the Public advised against it's construction due in part to it's incompatible nature with the limited space available via the route. Might I say here, how right they all have been proved already.

What a disgusting disaster it is with no real end in sight, massive cost blow outs, being sued by the installer, loss of a once spectacular environment, total disruption to people and businesses causing lost income, heartache and stress.

An inferior transport system that at 67 meters is the longest tram in the World, will need to cross 79 intersections while still navigating cars and pedestrians, can only travel at 18 kilometers/hour, will prove to be unable to deliver the needed capacity from day one, necessitating extra buses (wasn't the idea to have less)?

It will see 1000's of people inconvenienced as they are forced to change buses at Kingsford and Randwick, something I did 50 years ago when I lived in Pagewood but thought those OLD days were in the past.

Such a waste and down right shame, a band-aid operation which will need major surgery within the first year.

I would appreciate if my concerns are considered by the Committee.
I hope that the wisdom my age brings to the table will not be lost on deaf ears and perhaps recommendations can be made by the Committee to ensure potential and future infrastructure projects will be properly assessed and managed in the future.

Sincerely
Mrs Mary Richard
Maroubra Resident