

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

Organisation: For Daughters of ANZAC and Their Families

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The Impact of the CBD and South East Rail Project

My name is Margaret Hope, resident of Randwick, and I am writing this submission on behalf of Daughters of ANZAC and Their Families. Thank you for the opportunity to do so..

I, like many others, must have driven along Anzac Parade hundreds of times without realising the significance of it. I now know that it was named Anzac Parade for a very good reason, in fact, it's a highly significant parade which stretches more than 13 km from Moore Park Road to La Perouse with approximately 15 sites which are either memorial sites or sites which are important in the story of the volunteers who fought in World War I as well as WW2 and the Korean War.

The story of what took place along and beside Anzac Parade is largely forgotten and it is taking time to find out about all those places which meant so much to the volunteers and their families before, during and after World War I. More sites remain to be discovered or researched.

Anzac Parade is different to other monuments or commemorative sites because it has such a strong *sense of place*. It is where men and women trained and prepared for war and for some it represents the last place on Australian soil where they would ever walk. For others it represents a place where houses were provided on return so that they could resume some kind of normal life. It is a parade that is full of history which desperately needs recording before it slips entirely from memory.

When I first found out about the events that took place along the northern section of Anzac Parade, between the University of New South Wales and Moore Park Road, I felt almost ashamed of myself for not knowing that my father could have been one of those who was encamped on the grounds that are now in the University, trained in Moore Park and finally marched to the northern end of Anzac Parade where he would have said farewell to his family and friends before marching on to embark his ship at Woolloomooloo.

We have learnt that families met each year in Moore Park and commemorations were held around the Anzac Parade Memorial Obelisk which was decorated by the families and local school children up until the late 1920s. Anzac Parade and Moore Park was where it all began for many volunteers before being sent to various theatres of war – not only Gallipoli.

It was the fact that the story was almost entirely forgotten that daughters of ANAZC and Their Families was formed and the story documented on the website
daughtersofanzac.org

My shame at not having known the story quickly turned to utter disbelief when I realised that there was a very good reason why we had all been allowed to forget what happened there. Of all the millions spent on the Centenary of World War I, Anzac Parade was not even mentioned. Then when the light rail project became a reality, light dawned; we had been allowed to forget for a very good reason and now the building of the Tibby Cotter Bridge also began to make sense. It was not a bridge to nowhere – it was all part of a plan which we had been kept in the dark about involving not only a light rail system but a virtual take-

over of Moore Park. We, the citizens of Sydney, had been duped. We had certainly not been warned that Anzac Parade, which the Lord Mayor of Sydney in 1917 had called its best road, would be torn apart for the light rail and many of the of the magnificent fig trees would either be chopped down completely or cropped to the extent that many would not survive.

In the ABC Radio National programme Background Briefing 2016, Rod White, then State President NSW RSL said

“Up until the last of the Anzacs there used to still be gatherings out at the Anzac Obelisk. As much as it was in the middle of the road, they would have little gatherings on the side of the road. So we see it as a memorial grove of trees, with the Anzac Parade as a pavement and a memorial called the Anzac Obelisk.”

It seems incredible that someone could not have designed a route for the light rail which would have avoided the destruction of so many majestic heritage trees – the likes of which this generation and the next, and possibly the one after, will never see come to maturity. We now know that this could have been done if only there had been the will to make it happen. This destruction comes on the eve of what is fast becoming a revolution in transport, both public and private. In the other great cities of the world this revolution is well underway with driverless buses and trams in operation which do not need overhead wires.

The destruction of Anzac Parade by the building of the light rail has been a source of great resentment and disappointment. While the light rail might have some merit in a part of Sydney that is already well endowed with public transport, it surely did not have to be built in such an insensitive manner with the destruction of so much that is precious to the people of Sydney. The lack of vision and the disregard, not only for the environment but for the history as well, is mind-boggling.

On behalf of Daughters of ANZAC and Their Families, I am at present working with Dr Catherine Bond from the School of Law, University of New South Wales (author of *Anzac – the landing, the legend and the law*) in preparing a slide presentation documenting the significant sites along Anzac Parade, for the Director of Veterans’ Affairs Department. The more that is uncovered, the more it seems there still is to be uncovered. What we are producing will at least document what has taken place along Anzac Parade and at least pay some respect to those volunteers who went and fought in World War I.

We have sufficient material already to form the basis of a History Trail from north to south of Anzac Parade and it would be fitting if the NSW Government endorsed this project and supported our call for heritage listing of Anzac Parade and the surrounding parklands.

Margaret Hope
For Daughters of ANZAC and Their Families
Randwick
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