

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

Name: Ms Vivien Ward

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From :
Vivien Ward
South Coogee NSW 2034
8th July 2018

The Hon Fred Nile MLC
c/- Legislative Council Committee
Parliament of NSW

Re : Inquiry into the impacts of the CBD and SELR Project

Dear Mr Nile

I live in South Coogee and rely on public transport, through Randwick, to the city. I also highly value and appreciate the Centennial Parklands. For these reasons I have followed the progress of the Light Rail by reading the documents, attending every public 'consultation' for my area and writing submissions where appropriate. Overwhelmingly I feel a huge loss of trust and faith in the Government for the way that this whole process has been allowed to develop. The visual and environmental impacts through Moore Park and to Randwick are devastating. There must also be questions as to how this will be an improved transport system for residents. Clearly the financial cost is huge; there are also other 'costs' that no money can rectify.

1. No regard has been shown for the importance of the Centennial Parklands.

The commemorative features and heritage of these Parklands have not been shown any respect. Even the much loved Centennial Park has not been spared. Centennial Park land, leased to the ATC, has been turned into the appallingly ugly 'stabling yard'; the tree-lined edge along Alison Road has totally gone, replaced by concrete and steel poles and wires; even the ponds will have to take flooding to protect the tram tracks.

Federation Place at Moore Park, an expensive tribute to the birth of our nation, is now parking space for light rail vehicles as well as being cut through for the tracks and poles and wires. Anzac Parade, once a beautiful tree-lined avenue dedicated to the soldiers of WW1, has been so dreadfully lessened by the removal of trees, and Moore Park land has been sliced into. West Moore Park is just a wasteland of dirt mounds. While they may go, the tunnel portals never will.

Even the discovery of Aboriginal artefacts at the 'stabling' area was shown absolutely no respect. Wansey Road and High Street have suffered the same pattern of destruction. The Member for Coogee promised that High Cross Park at Randwick would be safe, and yet half of it has had the trees removed and the underground electricity substation seems seriously concreted around.

Is the Light Rail through Moore Park and to Randwick the only part of the project that has the ugliness of overhead wires?

2. The Parklands are for the people, however the Light Rail seems very much to be facilitating certain 'stakeholders' - the SCG, The Racecourse and the University of NSW.

It seems that the Government is backing these organisations, and the 'events' potential of Moore Park. **The Racecourse stop even has a 3rd line for extra trams for big events!** The Centennial Park Masterplan made much of the Light Rail stop being for Centennial Park with a big new entrance for the Park planned. Ironically, even the Transport Minister ridiculed the idea of the stop being named 'Centennial Park', choosing instead 'Royal Randwick'.

While I can see that the SELR may be a good 'people mover' for University students or even for spectators to football and cricket it is not looking to be a benefit as residential transport. Our current one bus to the city is to become a bus to Randwick to catch the tram - with only one route, limited seating, and long distances between stops (for in area travel).

With this apparent Government support predominantly for the SCG, Racecourse and Events, there must be fears for what they see as the future of this area. Our Parklands should be available for the enjoyment of everyone. However the Moore Park Masterplan allows for a whole length of Premium Football Fields in Eastern Moore Park. Apparently the lease of the tennis courts near the Golf Club is not being renewed. There is allowance for increased car parking at the Golf Club and E.S.Marks Field. More paths and another bridge will connect the SCG and the schools to the Light Rail stop. That stop itself will eat up more of the Parkland.

There can never be any compensation or recouping of all this Parkland that is being lost - and the Light Rail is either facilitating this or being used as the excuse for this taking away of Parkland from public use and enjoyment. Recreational park use seems not to be of any value in contrast with the Big Business and Global Aspirations that are envisaged. But it is our Parkland that is being vandalised and virtually stolen.

3. Consultation.

a) In December 2014 public submissions were invited in regards to the change of the Light Rail from beside the Racecourse to the Centennial Park side in Alison Road. Transport Minister Berejiklian signed the contract for the Light Rail project before close of business on the final day of consultation.

b) There is a wondrous migration of eels from Centennial Park, through the Botany Wetlands and on to Vanuatu to breed. The young return to the Ponds. At an information session the consultants working on those very drain exits on the opposite sides of Alison Road said that it was not their job to know what was happening on the other side. It certainly did not give a sense of confidence for the future of that species.

c) The original public meetings raised very serious concerns from residents. The impression was that these concerns were just a nuisance. The meetings became more controlled, and then became information evenings. **At the beginning I expected a more genuine consideration of local concerns.**

4. Government spin, and problems.

Certain inaccurate statements persist.

a) Capacity. The tram capacity of 450 passengers is always said to replace 9 buses, and thus help to ease city congestion. However, most of our buses carry 60+, 70+ or even 115 in the bendy buses. Very clearly this does not equate to 9 buses.

b) Tree replacement numbers have been stated as '8 for every large tree'. Of course they won't be here. No tree can be within 3 metres of the wires.

c) Difficult intersections:

i) At Darley Road - Alison Road the tram crosses the road. All traffic from all directions will have to stop for that.

ii) In recent weeks the tracks at that same intersection have been flooded, next to the racecourse. (This has happened despite the obvious manipulation of water flows that caused the Randwick Pond drains especially to back up.)

iii) There is talk of the WestConnex spilling out from Dacey Avenue into Anzac Parade and Alison Road. This must surely be abandoned as an idea. It would be beyond criminal to cut off any more footpaths, or to take more of the Parks. The trams and the traffic would surely be enough for this area to have to cope with.

d) Connection to the Light Rail for residents. It was said that all buses from Coogee, South Coogee and Maroubra will stop at Randwick, and passengers will change to the Light Rail. There is no further information about this so far.

e) Compensation for businesses. On Friday a Doctor told me that Blooms Pharmacy at Kingsford are saying that older patients are finding it hard to get there for their prescriptions. Anzac Parade is to be a 24 hour clearway. Of course the businesses will suffer, and the residents too. But none of this is new, and there has been no 'kind' word from the Government. I find that terrible.

Conclusion.

Obviously much of the negative impact of the CBD and SELR work cannot be altered. **However, perhaps your Committee could recommend a halt to any further impacts.** While compensation to businesses must be necessary (and there were people's homes taken too), there should also be recognition of the carelessness with which the Government has treated public opinion and publicly owned assets, even when of incalculable heritage and social value.

Perhaps you could recommend that the Centennial Parklands CEO and the Trust be allowed to protect these wonderful Parklands from the greed and acquisitiveness of big business. The Albert 'Tibby' Cotter Bridge was a grab by the SCG, and it is little used. Perhaps you could suggest that **no further car parking in any form should be**

allowed in the Parklands. The Light Rail has been immensely costly, both financially and environmentally. It would be shocking if more Parkland is acquired for increased car parking. Similarly, **no more roads or increased car traffic should be encouraged to impact on our Parklands, such as from a WestConnex exit.**

With this project the Government could be seen as serving big interests, including the gambling and alcohol industries, in preference to the people of NSW whose publicly owned assets they so freely dispose of. This is not how it should be.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns and even fears.

Yours sincerely

Vivien Ward