

**INQUIRY INTO ACQUISITION OF LAND IN RELATION TO
MAJOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 15 July 2021

Partially
Confidential

My name is _____ and _____ years of age. I am one of the landowners affected by the Orchard Hills compulsory land acquisition, residing at _____ Kent Road, Orchard Hills.

My husband and I moved to Orchard Hills to be close to our seven children, 24 years ago. We purchased the property with no improvements and therefore built our house knowing that it would be our last that we would reside in, due to our age and not wanting to move being we were within close proximity to all amenities. We built our home to accommodate for our growing family. Which now consists of 86, ranging from children to great grandchildren. We have created a close friendship with our neighbourhood and look out for one another.

Unfortunately, with the passing of my husband in late 2019, the need and importance of being close to my family, friends, doctors, shops, hospitals, public transport, my church community and has increased.

When I received the news of the compulsory acquisition, I was in shock and sadness overwhelmed me. So many emotions I was feeling, that I cannot express in words.

As time passed, I gradually accepted this news, thinking well Australia must improve, we can't stop the rail/infrastructure. Unfortunately, I've been hit with bad luck, but I will get paid out and purchase another property in Orchard Hills. I didn't want this, but I have no choice.

During the process, this has not been the case at all. I discovered that Sydney Metro were taking much more land than required for this project in comparison to other Sydney rail projects and that my property was only needed for a construction site and not the actual station. A tunnel would be constructed approximately 20-25 metres (Refer to the Environmental Impact Statement) under my property. Upon confirmation of this knowledge, I offered Sydney Metro to lease the property during the time needed for construction from as little as \$100 or less per year. Their answer was they cannot do that. When asked what Sydney Metro were going to use the land for, post construction, their answer was, WE DO NOT KNOW. This confirmed to me that this is purely an act of land grabbing RURAL ZONED LAND, taking advantage of landowners, legalised theft, your choice as to what you would like to call it.

Then, on top of all this, Metro offered me an amount that not just pushes me out of being able to purchase back in Orchard Hills, quite possibly the Nepean area also.

During the last few months, I pleaded to have Sydney Metro revalue my property as we were experiencing a rapid property market boom not seen in 30 years. They finally agreed to this. We received an email on 14th May 2021 from Sydney Metro, and in disbelief were advised that their valuer, _____ (who also completed the first valuation on the property) advised that there has been no increase in value. This was ludicrous, this situation and the acquisition process was becoming increasingly difficult, frustrating and unreasonable. We felt that Sydney Metro's valuer was either an incompetent valuer or we suspect that an alternative motive was at play.

This is what we have had to deal with, hitting our heads against a double brick wall with this Department. From here the battle continued, as we were not giving up the fight for market value. By this time, my depression had set in time my anxiety was through the roof, knowing that I would not be able to relocate in the Orchard Hills area with this compensation amount. These outcomes confirmed to us that Sydney Metro were massively taking advantage of this vulnerable community.

Were they hoping that I would cave in and accept this ridiculous offer, and allow us little people to be bullied? No way!!!!

Why should my children I have to fight for what my husband & I worked hard for? Why should I have to fight to be fairly compensated? Why should I have to fight for market value and uplift of the area? Why should I have to fight when it was Sydney Metro that knocked on my door, I didn't approach them or place a for sale sign on my property? Why should I be so heavily short paid when the broader community will benefit from my inconvenience and sacrifice? Why should I have to fight when Sydney Metro knows they will immensely profit from my property, as a result of land grabbing more than what is required. Pay me below market value, then in the future, rezone my rural land, sell off to developers to help pay for this project and possibly announce that the construction cost was under budget at completion. What they will forget to mention, is how they ripped off the poor landowner and put them through hell.

On the 30th June 2021, Sydney Metro emailed revised valuation, which is still well
below the market value.

I feel that my land has been acquired unnecessarily and I wish for amendments to be made, that if acquiring Government authorities are found not to be minimising the amount of homes and businesses taken, that they should be penalised and the landowners compensated for their loss.

I have been through difficult situations in my life, but this experience has been disgraceful and we are so disappointed with Sydney Metro. I would not wish this upon anybody. The Just Terms Compensation Act (1991) heavily favours the Government by far. Going by recent sales, we are unable to stay in Orchard Hills, it's as simple as that. We are not purchasing in the past we are purchasing in the future. Therefore don't pay past prices, pay today's or tomorrow's prices, because I will be purchasing in tomorrow's market, not yesterdays. Sydney Metro's valuation reports use 'recent sales' as far back as 2019. With this method used for compensation of land acquisitions, particularly when at present, the property market is increasing rapidly, at how on earth can the Just Terms Act be fair to the landowner.

Our independent valuers are unable to use recent contracts of sales that have been entered into, but have not settled. I feel that is also another area that needs to be reviewed.

To add to all the stress, if I have not found/purchased somewhere else to live, and require more time to live in my existing residence, they have the right to charge me market value rent. This leaves me further out of pocket. It's an act of bullying and as mentioned previously this whole acquisition process hugely favours Sydney Metro.

Therefore, I plead for Andrew Constance and Gladys Berejiklian the need to revise The Just Terms Act.

I'd like to finish off with this, "If any of you politicians were asked to have a pay cut to help fund the Orchard Hills train station, I'm sure I can confidently say, that not one of you would put up your hand. So how is this any different to me getting short paid for the acquisition of my land to benefit and provide for the broader community."

Thank you.