

Submission
No 26

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Organisation: Friends of Ultimo

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FRIENDS OF ULTIMO

friendsofucc@gmail.com

To
Legislative Council
Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts
portfoliocommittee6@parliament.nsw.gov.au

CC
The Hon. Kobi SHETTY, Member for Balmain
balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Ultimo, 21 March, 2024

SUBMISSION INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Friends of Ultimo (FoU) is a community action group, founded over ten years ago to address local Ultimo issues. We communicate with our 300 members through regular emails friendsofucc@gmail.com and a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ultimofriends>.

Although Ultimo is not directly affected by the **FORESEEABLE** chaos caused by the Rozelle Interchange, we express our total solidarity with the Annandale, Lilyfield, Leichhardt to Rozelle and Balmain peninsula residents, who have seen gridlocked traffic on their major roads and local streets. The Government must be held to account and forced to fix this mess.

We are particularly appalled by the situation of Victoria Road in Rozelle which successive Government promised to turn into a "Parisian Boulevard" but has instead turned into a gridlocked car sewer (a ten minutes journey now takes up to two hours!)

More generally FoU opposes urban freeways such as WestConnex. They are based on the **out-dated idea** that increasing the number of traffic lanes would alleviate traffic congestion when it has now been widely demonstrated that they would just attract more cars.

The Ultimo/Pymont Peninsula is indirectly affected by the Rozelle interchange mess through IfNSW's so-called **Western Distributor Road Network "Improvements."** The additional traffic attracted to the Inner City by the WestConnex toll road system must find its way out into our streets.

- The Western Distributor Road Network "Improvements" will turn Allen St, Pymont into a 4-lane motorway exit, significantly degrading the quality of life for residents of Allen St. They will increase traffic volumes not only along Harris St but across the whole Ultimo/Pymont Peninsula.
- A number of mature trees which shielded the local residents from the Western Distributor noise and pollution have been removed at the Bulwara Rd/Allen St intersection.
- Traffic conditions at Allen St/Harris St intersection have been altered, one pedestrian crossing removed and traffic light sequence changed in favour of motor vehicles.

This not only affects the local residents amenities but endangers the life of those attempting to cross Harris St.

Note: a new flyover ramp across Cockle Bay, which would further **overshadow and deface this iconic location** and require the **removal of dozens of mature palm trees is FORTUNATELY** now “subject to a future investment decision.”

The “improvements” directly contradict the NSW Government’s own Pyrmont Peninsula Precinct Strategy (PPPS 2020)

- The PPPS locates Allen Street in the Pyrmont Village sub-precinct where “Place Priorities” include “**rejuvenating Harris Street as the historic urban spine of the Peninsula**” by:

- a. creating a new street-based public transport link (such as a bus or other mode) *along the Innovation Corridor from the Bays Precinct to Tech Central and Australian Technology Park.*
- b. *investigating **reduction in traffic lanes** and conversion to allow for a contra-flow bus lane between Thomas Street and Regent Street.*
- c. *widening footpaths, rationalising bus stops and **providing new pedestrian crossings.***
- d. *creating active transport connections to Harris Street.*
- e. *improving the streetscape, enhancing heritage buildings and increasing tree cover.*
- f. *installing heritage interpretative elements.*
- g. *creating new centres of activity as major sites are developed, with new connections and open spaces and busy street frontages to **transform Harris Street into a pleasant pedestrian environment.***

- The PPPS also records that when “the Western Distributor was opened in 1972...the Pyrmont flyovers isolated and divided the urban area below.”

The project would only increase this isolation and division.

- Direction 7 of the PPPS recommends “prioritising walking and cycling as the preferred mode...making it easier to cross busy roads (and)...discouraging the use of private vehicles.”

The “Improvements” only serve to encourage the use of private vehicles and make it more difficult to cross busy Harris and Allen Streets.

In conclusion the current problems in Rozelle were **entirely foreseeable** when the ill-conceived WestConnex mammoth project was launched and its negative consequences extend well beyond the suburbs it crosses.

Patricia JOHNSON & Jean-Pierre ALEXANDRE

Friends of Ultimo
 [FriendsofUltimo@ultimofriends](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofUltimo@ultimofriends)