

**Submission
No 93**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

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Date Received: 21 March 2024

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the impacts to residents following the opening of the Rozelle Interchange.

The Westconnex Rozelle Interchange was a much anticipated congestion reliever promised to the long-suffering residents along the Victoria Road corridor.

The reality of catastrophic impacts as a consequence of poor design, untested thinking and the absence of considered community consultation is now the daily experience. Residents are subjected to rat runs and increased safety risk in local streets as commuters seek to bypass the hotspot that is the entire length of the Drummoyne section of Victoria Road, aided by Google Maps and Waze navigation guidance through suburban streets.

Residents are blocked from leaving the suburb to do school runs, get to the gym, work, etc. by completely congested roads. If you can get out, you are equally concerned about being able to get back home.

The design and thinking of directing traffic to the city completely misses the fact that not everyone is travelling to the city. I am one of those people who needs to get to Camperdown every morning for training, Lilyfield at the weekends, and then struggle to get back home.

Anytime I need to get to Gladesville, Ryde or Lane Cove from Drummoyne, I never know if I will be able to get out, and then once I am out, the challenge is being able to return in a timely fashion.

Increased Safety Risks

Resident and pedestrian safety has been placed at greater risk with the creation of rat runs on both sides of Victoria Road, through local streets. On the East side, through Renwick and Alexandria Sts, and St Georges Cres residential streets. On the West side, via Westbourne & Marlborough Sts, turning right to Lyons and left on Thompson St (since "No Left Turn during AM peak" signage was removed), travel to Henley Marine Drive and rejoin Victoria Road at the Iron Cove Bridge (because that used to be blocked during morning peak, but has been removed), skipping all traffic lights on the whole of Drummoyne section of Victoria Road being held at Red for long periods.

Commuters from outer suburbs are all travelling through residential streets at peak times, and are often aggressive due to ongoing frustrations with the impacts of the congestion caused by the changes introduced as part of the Rozelle Interchange.

The moving of the Bus Lane city bound into the middle lane further increases safety risk as buses are now weaving in and out of the bus lane to the left lane in order to pick up and drop off passengers. It is a matter of time before a bus driver misses seeing the one car that does want to turn left into Balmain after Terry St, and crushes it, and potentially any passengers waiting at the bus stop. Bus drivers have given the feedback of not being consulted of this move, the danger of it, and the impossibility of being able to drive the bendy buses safely in this lane.

For clarification, no one uses the "Left-only" lane after Terry Street at Rozelle, because that is the main left-turn into Balmain. The left lane on Victoria Road is now empty and inaccessible to traffic because of its conversion to a left-only lane. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) representatives at Monday night's (18/03/2024) Drummoyne community forum advised the "thinking" behind this is vehicles needing to access Balmain. This statement proves that this was untested "thinking" and implemented without consultation. The main access point to Balmain city-bound is at the Terry St intersection on Victoria Rd.

The moving of the bus lane to the middle lane, and the left lane now a "left-only" lane also means that during off-peak times and at the weekend there is a single lane for cars on a major road city-bound. People are trying to get kids to sport, do groceries, get to other inner-west suburbs, and

otherwise go about their business and are heavily impacted by this, and hampered in their efforts to simply move around their suburbs.

Signalling

It is the worst-kept secret that city-bound Victoria Road is kept at a Red signal for extended periods of time seemingly to create the illusion of improved traffic conditions at Rozelle. Signalling changes are now causing local streets to become congested leaving residents struggling to egress or re-enter their own suburbs.

TfNSW representatives talked to data collected and the slight increase to average travel times. It was also suggested that residents "try different routes or different methods or different travel times", and that "new roads take about 6mo to settle".

Again, this points to a complete lack of consultation on design and "thinking". For Drummoyne residents, the suburb being largely a peninsula, much like Balmain, there are no alternate routes. Buses are frequently cancelled, and services being altered and reduced since privatisation mean for many, especially if you are not travelling to the city, the bus is no longer an option. The ferry is not an option unless Barangaroo or Circular Quay is your destination, while for others, the suggestion of travelling at a different time for family and work reasons, is not an option either.

The 3-to-1 hard merge on Victoria Road outbound and lack of priority to public transport is also another pain point causing further congestion. The bus lane on the new section of Iron Cove bridge has been halved for this hard merge, with buses also required to hard merge, with two lanes dedicated to the tunnel traffic. The creation of an all-day bus lane on the Gladesville Bridge, from a morning peak and T3 lane, further congests traffic from outer suburbs into 2 lanes.

Where a new road has been introduced and its immediate impact is worse than ever congestion, no amount of time will help it settle. People will find ways to get through it, as is now being seen with the rat runs through residential streets, putting residents at increased safety risk.

Recommendations:

- Consultation and communication with community groups and local councils to assess potential impacts of proposed changes in transparent forums.
- This will allow other solutions to be brought to light for consideration with impacts assessed and best outcomes sought
- Design changes:
 1. Gladesville Bridge bus lane city-bound returned to 6-9am M-F Bus & T-lane
 2. Improvement of tunnel signage (Port Botany)
 3. Policing of local streets (East Drummoyne for an interim period)
 4. Reinstate "No left turn" on Lyons Road during AM M-F peak
 5. Reinstate closed entrance to Iron Cove bridge city bound from Henley Marine during AM M-F peak.
 6. Re-open bus stop near Birkenhead Point on Victoria Road during AM M-F peak.
 7. Remove bus lane on Lyons Rd (Bayswater to Marlborough St)
 8. Review of variable lanes on Vic Rd given signalling changes
 9. Remove differentiated red-light sequencing, and return to parallel on both sides of Victoria Road.
 10. Return the Bus lane to the left lane along Victoria Road city-bound from Terry St.

11. Return middle lane of Victoria Road city-bound to traffic, after Terry St, Rozelle.
12. Re-instate the Bus Lane on the west-bound section of Victoria Road along the Iron Cove Bridge to return priority to public transport (presently a 3-to-1 merged lane for vehicles and buses)
13. Introduce gradual merge for vehicles at the entrance to Anzac Bridge city-bound, give Buses priority access
14. Introduce gradual merge on Victoria Road at Terry St, Westbound
15. Introduce merge of lanes from tunnel traffic at all exits from tunnel

It is with fervent interest and hope that commonsense will prevail that TfNSW will look at all proposed recommendations to correct serious design flaws, and communicate and consult with impacted communities, and take into future projects a new approach to community consultation and its importance in ensuring optimal solutions and outcomes.

Sincerely

Claudia Campbell