

Submission
No 105

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE
INTERCHANGE**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 24 March 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Committee Members

I write to provide feedback on the implementation of the Rozelle Interchange.

When the Rozelle Interchange opening in early November 2023, the impact on traffic leaving the Balmain/Rozelle peninsular was profound. What had been a 10-15 minute journey to work for my wife (I ran her to work on Harris Street in Pyrmont from Gallimore Avenue in Balmain East) became a much longer journey. I had to fly to Singapore on the Tuesday, so missed the worst of it later that week - my wife had to abandon her journey later that week as, after an hour, she was still not on the Victoria Road. However, on my return from Singapore, I benefitted from the significantly faster (and cheaper) journey from the airport to Balmain using the new M8 link - this is truly an improvement. Since then, the situation has not really improved. Off peak, I can do the journey from home to collect my wife in about 9-10 minutes. The fact it takes nearly an hour most mornings is completely unacceptable. I can't help but feel that the existing merging configuration adversely affects any traffic from Balmain/Rozelle wanting to travel over the Anzac Bridge - it appears the "winners" come from the (tolled) M4 route. It feels that this is a blatant ploy to favour toll paying traffic over local traffic.

Furthermore, it really isn't clear to me that the so called "improvements" have had any material impact. I remain sceptical that, presumably, the same "experts" that designed the original flow have been responsible for improving the flow. I can't help but feel that a review by an independent company would be advantageous - please see my comment in the final paragraph.

However, the major cause of my complaint is... Signage. I am extremely keen to understand what customer experience testing was performed on the new signs before the interchange went live. I have three specific examples:

1. We went to the beach (Mollymook) for Christmas - we had some last minute shopping to do at Harris Farms in Drummoyne before we went, so entered the M8 tunnel straight from Iron Cove Bridge - what a delightful journey - very very easy and so much quicker. However, compare and contrast with the return journey - even though I knew I wanted to use the M8, the signs on approach from the M5 were so confusing (they showed Randwick and Kingswood(?) but no mention of Drummoyne, or Parramatta or anywhere else I recognised as being my way home) I inadvertently stayed on the M5 towards the airport - expecting to come off later to the correct part of the M8 - sadly not - I went up the old M1 and CCT link... This cost me more money, took longer and frustrated me - all could have been easily avoided with better signs. I raised this with both Inner West Council and Transport NSW at the time - but no reply to date.
2. Similar experience leaving Sydney domestic terminal on 18th January (I had picked someone up). No "big picture" signs - no sign to M8 at all - it would be so easy to have a sign that said (in pictorial form) M5 left, M8 straight on, M1 right, but nothing like that. I mistakenly went left and ended up on the M5 - more unnecessary tolls, frustration etc., This journey home got worse later - see below.
3. Anzac Bridge signs. Two sets of very clear signs on the bridge itself (and I think they have been improved since the intersection opening, but not entirely sure) - well done. The airport sign is clearly on these signs as needing to be in the two right hand lanes. However, the final sign before you get to the Victoria Road, even though there is ample room on the sign, there is no airport sign - this seems to summarise Transport for NSW approach to signs - unless you know exactly which road you want to use, there is no point relying on the signs. Anecdotally this seems to be the case from the airport on the M8 - many people I have spoken to have found themselves corralled onto the Iron Cove Bridge rather than to the City West link exit - again, due to bad/misleading signs.

My journey from the airport on 18th January. I sent in a complaint to both Inner West Council (reference REQ2024-010257) which was forwarded to Transport NSW as well as directly to Transport NSW (sorry, I did not make a note of the reference). When I finally got onto the M8 tunnel from the airport to Balmain and left at the correct exit, I was corralled onto the Anzac Bridge as the road to

Victoria Road was closed. No signs in the tunnel saying this and I have not received any feedback to either complaint - extremely poor...

Finally, I have two suggestions for improvement. Firstly, I am happy to donate my time to accompany any or all of you on a short journey around the area to highlight the issues I have raised above - happy to use my vehicle or a government car at your choice. I feel that you would all benefit from first hand experience of some of the issues. Secondly, I have copied a very good friend of mine, Angie Crafer, who is a director of a company in New Zealand, Flow NZ, who specialise in traffic flow. I cannot help but think a review of the existing road layouts etc. by a company not previously involved in the design/implementation would be a major benefit - getting a fresh pairs of eyes to review would surely be helpful - even if the outcome of such a review is that the existing layout is optimal (although I am very sceptical that this would be the case).

Yours faithfully