

**Submission
No 112**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Name: Simon Gatward

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Inquiry submission

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Submission to Rozelle Interchange Inquiry

I am a long term resident of Drummoyne and Chair of the Drummoyne Residents Traffic Committee, a group formed following a meeting of Drummoyne residents who have been significantly impacted by traffic congestion along the Drummoyne section of Victoria Road and consequently, the surrounding roads prior to and subsequent to the opening of the Rozelle Interchange.

My submission will reference items (b), (c), (e), (f), (i) and (j) of the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry.

I would be pleased to represent the Drummoyne Community directly at the hearings.

Submission

Notwithstanding the obvious building and tunnelling taking place in Rozelle, Drummoyne residents had not been impacted by the new infrastructure until 5 November 2022 when one lane, city bound, was closed on the Iron Cove bridge without notice. The impact on an already congested road was immediate. This lane close coincided with traffic calming measures Canada Bay Council had independently implemented in roads adjacent to Victoria Rd. These local roads immediately became congested with "rat running" commuters.

I wrote to TfNSW and Council seeking to understand how and why (1) there was no communication or consultation with local residents about the lane closure and (2) how it was possible that obviously conflicting and compounding actions were taken at the same time. It was clear from respective responses that there was no communication between TfNSW and Council and further, TfNSW saw no need to inform impacted residents and that whilst the lane closure was a minor inconvenience, all will be well once the tunnel opened.

A second, similar issue occurred when a new bus lane was implemented along the length of Gladesville Bridge. No consultation, no communication and no responsibility for the impact from TfNSW. The new lane increased rat running through the eastern side of Victoria Rd as commuters used the bus lane to exit Victoria Rd left at Lyons Rd.

Question: What modelling was undertaken by TfNSW to understand the impact of these changes and why did TfNSW not inform Canada Bay Council and/or residents on the impact.

The tunnel opened with much fanfare and the impact to Drummoyne residents was immediate.

Travel times to the city on public transport became an hour or more for residents close to Victoria Rd, those travelling from the western edge of Drummoyne along Lyons Rd faced travel times of 90 minutes. More greatly affected were residents trying to move around the suburb for school drop off or for medical appointments. With Victoria Rd and Lyons Rd both grid locked and adjacent roads grid locked with frustrated rat running commuters it became impossible to move around or exit the suburb.

Against previous written commitments of it all being well once the tunnel opened, TfNSW failed.

Question: The impact to local roads and inter suburb travel times must have been modelled by TfNSW. Why was this modelling not published.

It is apparent that since opening, TfNSW have been forced to manage traffic flow to ease congestion along the Rozelle / Balmain stretch of Victoria Rd. The consequence of their actions has simply been to increase congestion in Drummoyne further impacting their safety.

Per Terms of Reference 1.(B) and 1.(F), TfNSW have substantially failed to consult with or inform local residents as to the impact of the project to the residents of Drummoyne and continue to ignore any obligation, structural or moral to do so.

Question: What commitment will TfNSW make to ensure the residents of Drummoyne and Canada Bay Council are both consulted with and informed of any further changes TfNSW plan to make with regard to traffic flows, road design, ATS timing and ATS placement.

The Drummoyne residents came together at a community meeting on the 25th March to voice their concerns that increased congestion has had to them. Representatives of TfNSW were present and disappointingly unprepared. It was clear they have little to no regard as to the consequence their actions have had on local (Council) roads. Moreover, their recommendations as to alternative travel options to the city were generic and ignorant of the actual options available.

The community have identified a number of concerns and recommendations which have been presented to TfNSW, Canada Bay Council and this inquiry. I don't intent to repeat them here but urge the inquiry to ensure that a formal structure be established to engage with the community in responding to these points and on-going. To this point, there has been no engagement, no communication and no opportunity to provide feedback that generates anything other than a generic response. TfNSW assumes residents will inform themselves of change but has assumed interest lies only in Victoria Rd. I have hopefully identified here that the greatest concern for residents is not the journey time along Victoria Rd but the time it takes to cross it at peak times.

Sincerely,

Simon Gatward