

**Submission
No 113**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Organisation: Rozelle Public School Parents and Citizens Association

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Parliament enquiry

I would like to thank the Chair, Ms Cate Faehrmann and the Honourable members of this committee for inviting the Rozelle Public School P&C to provide feedback, thoughts and opinions on the impacts of the Rozelle interchange on Rozelle Public school students, their families and wider community.

There are four key topics that I'd like to put to the committee. These topics are representative of the community feedback, and offered to you as an overview of matters of great importance and ones that have the most significant negative impact on the lives and livelihood of our local community inclusive of parents, children and denizens.

The topics are:

1. The safety of our children: on the roads & the air quality
2. Traffic congestion for above ground vehicles
3. Impact of the Rozelle Interchange on the lives of families and the community of Rozelle Public School
4. The discovery and clean up of Asbestos in Rozelle Parklands

After I have discussed these in more detail, I would then like to make a few suggestions and request timely action to address these issues to the benefit of our community, and communities like ours.

Thank you.

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The safety of our children

The safety of the children in our community is now compromised. Two significant ways this is occurring every day are the gridlock traffic congestion that makes walking to school a type of Squid Game activity when attempting to cross the road and the unfiltered air stacks emitting potentially deadly gasses into the atmosphere and into the growing lungs of our children.

The **traffic safety** issue is concerning and I'd like to share a few quotes from school parents describing the situation:

One parent stated:

'The traffic in the mornings is sometimes so bad that it is hard to walk children to school. You need to weave around the cars blocking the crossings as they try to make their way onto and down Victoria Rd. This is because there are too many lanes merging into one'

And another quote:

'The intersection of Darling Street and Victoria Road became dangerous for pedestrians when the Interchange opened as confused and frustrated motorists blocked the crossings at the traffic lights and some continued to drive through them during the walk signal'

These statements summarize the thoughts and concerns of our parental community, highlighting the danger for children walking to school. Some older children who prior to the Interchange opening, walked to school alone are now supervised on their walk to and from school due to this issue.

Pedestrian safety is an essential right for all members of our community. This is currently not the case.

The safety of our children and the air quality

The Rozelle Public School (RPS) P&C association has been using its own funds to pay for air quality monitoring on school grounds. This provides us with information and sends an alarm to us when the air quality is low. However, there is little we can do when an alarm is received as all school buildings are unsealed and use the outside air also. This poor air quality affects the whole community.

The community wants to know why the stacks aren't filtered. Is the cost of human lives too low compared to the cost of electricity? A filtered stack would benefit the local community and the numerous visitors that come to the Rozelle/ Balmain peninsula for the markets, food offerings, ocean baths, stellar city views and more.

The stacks in Rozelle are currently unfiltered and one of the sits on Victoria Rd, at a significantly lower 'ground level' than the school which is at the top of the ridge. Therefore making it susceptible to receiving the unfiltered air more frequently than if both the stack and the school were at the same elevation.

I believe that similar types of stacks are required by law to be filtered in parts of Europe. It is curious to our community why the same laws do not apply here to protect us. Many years from now we may learn the true cost of not filtering these stacks.

Traffic congestion for above ground vehicles

There are numerous factors in the unmanageable traffic congestion including the offset bus lane, numerous lanes merging into one lane, priority for toll-paying traffic and timed lights for above ground vehicles.

The city bound offset bus lane serves to remove yet another lane from use on Victoria Road and add to the congestion.

A voice in our community stated: *'Traffic from the toll road is prioritised over local traffic. All the lanes of Victoria Road, and the City West Link need to merge into one lane, which then merges again onto the Anzac Bridge. That is crazy! Cars are delayed, buses are delayed. Yet the toll roads are free flowing'*

There is some suspicion that this indeed is the case. My community wants to know was the contract written to give priority to vehicles from the Westconnex?

Impact of the Rozelle Interchange on the lives of families and the community of Rozelle Public School

Less foot traffic, and high congestion of cars on peak hours has resulted in fewer visitors to our area. Therefore reduced retail sales and our local businesses are struggling.

Families who decided to live in a smaller house, to be located close to the CBD for their work have found themselves with a commute time that has more than doubled, poor air quality, congested pedestrian crossings, slower public transport and no reward for the Rozelle Interchange opening after years of nighttime drilling disturbances.

The impact of the Rozelle Interchange on our community is one without significant positives.

The discovery and clean up of Asbestos in Rozelle Parklands

It took a sharp eyed Rozelle parent to notice the asbestos contamination and alert authorities. This is symbolic of our issues with the Rozelle Interchange.

Summary

In summary, the traffic is bad, the air quality threatening, the soil contaminated, and the businesses struggling as a direct result of the Rozelle Interchange.

I suggest the following, **if** you are contractually obliged to keep the Westconnex open;

1. Filter all of the stacks
2. Move the offset bus lane back to the kerb side lane
3. Install a red light camera at the intersection of Darling st and Victoria Road

Thank you for your indulgence.

Annabelle Berriman
President of the Rozelle Public School P&C Association