



Ms Priti Cleary, NSW Planning
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27th April, 2020

Upgrade to Fort Street School- SSDA **SSD 10340**

I write to request an urgent meeting between the Millers Point Community Residents Action Group (MPCRAG) and the key decision makers re the above project.

Our Strata Committee, representing over 300 owners and residents, are extremely concerned about the safety of residents, workers and tourists, especially children and older people, as a result of the proposed diversion of cycle traffic from the current cycle path from the Harbour Bridge to the Kent Street underpass.

The plans propose to divert approximately 2,000 bicycles a day on weekdays down Watson Road, Argyle Street and Kent Street and 1,000 a day at weekends. This diversion will be in place for the duration of the build and then for an unconfirmed period when the school is completed to upgrade the cycleway. We estimate that up to 1,000 of these cycles will travel this route Monday to Friday during the morning peak alone. The current cycle route will be closed from the commencement of construction until some months after the school is completed. This will conflict not only with morning traffic, but once the school is completed with parents dropping off kids at the school and local residents and workers.

Kent Street has cars parked on both sides of the road most weekdays, with one lane in each direction plus parking, principally for residents. There are also a number of pedestrian and vehicle crossings to stop the traffic flow, increasing the hazard level. Not only will the streets become clogged, but based on current experience, bikes will move to the footpaths to avoid this traffic and move faster. Adult cyclists already race along the footpath when Kent St is clogged. The trend to motorised bikes makes this even more dangerous.

Cars exiting Observatory Tower, The Georgia, and Highgate would be unable to see a speeding bike quickly enough to stop. Other Kent Street buildings that may be concerned about the risk include the Langham Hotel, the fire station and retail outlets. Finally, we are very concerned re the risk to children being dropped off and picked up if the cycleway is not kept well away from these points going forward.

Apart from the risk to pedestrians and cyclists, we believe this situation will be extremely difficult to police effectively. Altercations between pedestrians and bikes are also inevitable. Not only is this dangerous, it impacts our harmonious neighborhood.

The Traffic Committee and local owners, with extensive experience in a combination of major traffic and building works, have identified workable alternatives that would mitigate this problem. We are keen, as I am sure government is, to avoid major traffic snarls, major discontent, injury and possibly even deaths.

In particular, we believe the cycleway needs to be completed first and that a group needs to convene urgently to agree a practical solution that achieves the overall objectives with the least disruption. I request your support for me to meet with key decisionmakers and the MPCRAG to agree workable alternative to the current proposal.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Wright
Chair, Observatory Strata Committee