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The Hon Jo Haylen MP
Minister for Transport
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister Haylen

Proposed Building of Cycleway & Related Changes in Oxford Street, South Paddington

I am writing to you to express my strong objections to the cycleway proposed to be built on the south side of Oxford Street in South Paddington. I have already expressed my concerns to your staff at the recent pop-up at the Paddington Markets on Saturday, as well as at a meeting of stakeholders held at Allianz Stadium in relation to another proposal relevant to your area of responsibility, that being the proposed five-fold increase to the number of events hosted at Allianz Stadium. I write this letter to bring everything together and for completeness.

Background & Context of Objection

I appreciate the commitment of the City of Sydney and the NSW Department for Transport to building cycleways with a view to create a vibrant city with diverse options for transportation. Having said that, I believe that the City's commitment to the cycleway in Oxford Street fails to recognise and accept that Oxford Street was not built to accommodate the aspiration Council has in mind and, even with the best will in the world, it will never have the capacity to accommodate multiple lanes of traffic, cycleways, public transport, public transport infrastructure and pedestrians. It is not built with that in mind and is not fit for that purpose; trying to cram in what is required to realise the City's dream is neither possible nor desirable and will cause material harm and loss of amenity to the very people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the aspiration. It just makes no sense, and is causing enormous stress and anxiety for residents and business owners alike in the Paddington precinct.

If you proceed with the proposal we will end up with an outcome where everyone loses, including the people of NSW and the City of Sydney, whose rates and taxes will have been invested in building infrastructure that doesn't deliver what was hoped for while at the same time destroying the fabric and amenity of the Oxford Street village in the meantime. Oxford Street is still in the very early stages of recovering from the ravages of COVID, and this proposal would be the kiss of death for many of those businesses who are only just beginning to crawl (let alone walk) after the pandemic.

It also seems extraordinary to me that Council and government would pursue this development when there is an existing cycleway on Moore Park Road that, I suspect with considerably less

investment (and disruption) than would be required to construct the proposed cycleway in Oxford Street, would provide a better solution for a larger number of stakeholders, making it a better option overall.

Let me also address a few specific concerns below.

Multiple Disparate Proposals are Confusing and Concerning

I currently feel like I am being pulled in multiple directions as a resident of South Paddington, trying to fight off fires on three fronts. The first relates to this proposal to build the cycleway on Oxford Street, the second relates to the Stadium's application to increase by 5-fold the number of concerts that it may host pursuant to its planning permit and the third relates to the recently talked about (but with very little detail around it) proposal to build a tramline in Oxford Street. With so much going on, and with those close to each proposal insisting that they are quite separate (when as a resident they are very much related and inter-connected to one another) it is exhausting.

For me, there is a brave new world where the Stadium hosts five times as many concerts as it does today without any changes to the way in which traffic (both vehicular and foot) is managed in the precinct (and this is exactly what is proposed, not me putting a particularly negative spin on it). At the same time, the cycleway is being built in Oxford Street so my access to my home in South Paddington is compromised and my village is a construction zone for who knows how many years. Then, to top it all off, once the cycleway is built, plans commence to rip it all up so that a tram line can be built down Oxford Street. Not fun.

Primary Role of Oxford Street/Removal of RHT from Oxford Street into Oatley Road and Greens Road

Oxford Street is one of only two options for traffic moving from the CBD to the eastern suburbs of Sydney. It is also the key access route for emergency services heading to St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst. If Oxford Street is reduced from 2 lanes to one lane for motor vehicle traffic outside peak hours, we will have chaos whenever any vehicle stops for any reason (I'm thinking rubbish trucks, deliveries, Uber drivers) and for emergency situations where cars will be no longer be able to move to another lane to allow emergency service vehicles to pass or because a vehicle has broken down.

The situation will be made worse because the proposal includes the removal of an ability to turn right from Oxford Street in to Oatley Road and Greens Road (a route that I take multiple times every day to get to my home, as does almost everyone who lives in South Paddington – it's our only option other than adding considerably more time to our commute by travelling to Moore Park Road via Liverpool Street). This will mean that some cars will turn left into Underwood Street from Oxford Street to avoid the traffic, resulting in Underwood Street (which is narrow and one way) becoming congested and dangerous and downright annoying if you live there. That traffic will then (presumably) turn right into Jersey Road from Underwood Street so that they can go back down Oxford Street and turn left into Oatley Road. This may not mean anything to you Minister but imagine if your route home after work just doubled in time because of a change that neither you nor any of your neighbours wanted but that government and Council pursued anyway for the sake of a handful of cyclists who, to add insult to injury, had a viable alternative in Moore Park Road anyway. It would make you crazy which is exactly how I feel.

Pedestrians

If it is true that pedestrians are the most important stakeholder in the City of Sydney, then the proposal is failing them. I walk around the streets of Paddington (south and north) every day to buy goods locally, walk my dog, buy a coffee, etc. My experience with a disproportionate number of

cyclists, particularly the commuter variety, experiences that have been shared by fellow neighbours, including a young local woman who is blind, is too often one of being treated with contempt for getting in their way. I have been screamed at for using a pedestrian crossing because the cyclist didn't want to have to stop for me.

The construction of a cycleway will only add to these problems especially when pedestrians will be expected to cross the cycleway to access public transport (I understand that the bus stop will be on an island rather than next to the hardware store where it currently is, and that there will be no shelter or seating which will be a disaster for older pedestrians and those who are less mobile or robust than others). They will also need to cross the cycleway to cross the road to the north side of Oxford Street. Commuter cyclists travel at speeds of up to 30kmph and they are not able to stop quickly. This is a genuine concern for pedestrians, particularly those who are older or less mobile, because being struck by a commuter cyclist is a serious concern.

Moore Park Road Cycleway

The pop-up cycleway on Moore Park Road has been online now for a number of years and was recently extended. I appreciate that residents of Moore Park Road have their own concerns with the cycleway, and I understand that the Stadium also has concerns. However, it seems to me that because Moore Park Road is a very wide road without any businesses along its length, it is a better solution for a permanent cycleway than Oxford Street which is narrow and congested and lined its entire length with restaurants and small businesses still struggling after the pandemic. I also believe that the Stadium's concerns about allowing punters to leave safely after events could be managed by temporarily closing the cycleway during major events. It may even be possible to locate the cycleway in the middle of the road rather than on the side of the road. Surely the cost of doing that would be no greater than what is contemplated by the Oxford Street proposal, and I suspect it is one that would be acceptable to many more residents because it mitigates the harms to the largest number of residents and business owners.

I request that you seriously consider my concerns in the context of the long-term interests of the largest number of affected stakeholders.

Yours faithfully



Nicole McKenna