

*15<sup>th</sup> December 2013*

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I write as a resident of Coogee and as a professional historian to oppose the use of High Cross Park, Randwick (and immediately adjacent streets) as a terminus, bus interchange, and tram/bus stop for the proposed Eastern Suburbs Light rail project.

#### **HISTORIC HEART OF RANDWICK**

High Cross park is the historic centre of the suburb and city of Randwick. It's shape and streetscape is the heart of Randwick and it defines its identity and shape. It defines its place as one of the earliest areas of European settlement in Australia. You can stand in the centre of the park and see some of the most important colonial buildings still standing. It is easy to imagine to Simeon Pearce and other worthies of high Victorian Sydney society prominating in the square it forms. The High Cross Park precinct is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful town squares in Australia.

#### **MAINTAIN STREETSCAPE**

A number of road widening projects in the last two decades have reduced its size, but at least, these did not involve structures above ground level. This project threatens to not only further reduce the size of this tiny piece of "sacred ground" but impose industrial sized buildings (i.e. interchanges) onto the streetscape.

#### **War Memorial**

For all local residents, including those of us who have had ancestors who have fought in military conflicts, it is an important place of reflection and remembrance for all servicemen and women. A number of press reports quote Department of Transport spokespersons with inaccurate information about the war memorial. For instance, they inaccurately assert that it has inscribed on it 4,000 names of World War One veterans. This is not the case and highlights the lack of understanding about the emotional importance of this site.

Furthermore, no work should be considered on the Park without undertaking extensive archeological investigation. This small area has not had any large above ground structures built on it – either before or after its European occupation.

#### **ALTERNATIVES?**

Where else can the terminus go? The project's construction from the corner of Anzac Parade to Randwick seems to involve so many dangers to mature trees, historic buildings and sites as well as a decade long disruption to public amenity, that it makes me wonder whether it is really worthwhile at all. Maybe you could:

- \* Build city tunnels for the bus services as they have done in Brisbane
- \* Use the under-utilized Hospital Road in Randwick as a terminus. The Prince of Wales Hospital uses this for parking and loading access. A multistory car-park over part of the road could not only replace lost parking, but increase it and commercial opportunity as well.
- \* Tunnels - most cities I have visited overseas have opted for tunnels.

Whatever the benefits of a light rail system, suggesting that High Cross Park should be used as a terminus seems to me that the sight has been blithely picked up off a map with out consideration of its important historical values.

Yours sincerely  
Paul Convy