

22nd October 2017

To: Department of Planning and Environment

Re: Parramatta Light Rail Proposal Application Number: SSI 17-8285

This submission is made collectively by the restaurants and cafes on Church Street, Parramatta.

Our precinct, Eat Street, has for decades been a multicultural hub of cuisine offerings, and a core part of Parramatta's cultural identity. The restaurants and cafes have made this a premier dining destination for residents and visitors to Parramatta. We provide employment to hundreds of our staff many of whom are residents of Parramatta themselves.

The light rail route is proposed to run directly through our street, and our hospitality businesses would be particularly sensitive to disruption from the construction works proposed. Seeing the effects on businesses of light rail construction happening in other parts of Sydney is worrying that these proposed construction works will lead to a significant decrease of patrons to our area, threatening the survival of the restaurants and cafes who have been such a big part of Parramatta's identity.

We wouldn't want to stand in the way of progress, and understand that large infrastructure projects such as this would likely benefit Parramatta in the long run. However, there is a high level of uncertainty about the project as to how it would affect our businesses, and high levels of anxiety amongst us and our staff due to lack of some answers and commitment of support we require to be able to make decisions and operate our businesses. It is difficult to plan further capital investment in our businesses, invest in hiring and training of new staff, promising job security to current staff, in the face of uncertainty.

Below is a list of common concerns, questions, and commitments requested which we believe would make the more difficult stages of this project easier for our businesses.

- 1) Give a firm indication of how long the construction works on our street will be expected to take rather than leaving it up to the winner of the tender for the works to decide how they will proceed. Commit to a timeframe, include that timeframe for Eat Street as a condition when putting out the tender for the works, and impose a penalty for any delays significant enough to be a strong incentive to complete the works on schedule. Any funds raised from a penalty can be used to support struggling businesses.
- 2) Commit to planning and completing the works on Eat Street separately to the rest of the Parramatta CBD works, allocating additional resources where possible to minimize the time our area will be affected due to our business sensitivity to the disruption. If possible, complete the works within our street in blocks which are

shifted along the street as works are completed, rather than closing off and hoarding up the entire street.

- 3) Outline a plan to provide financial support to businesses struggling to cover overhead expenses during the toughest periods of construction, to help us survive, and prevent staff lay-offs. Knowing how much restaurant turnover has dropped in other areas where light rail construction has taken place, many of the us are worried that if we experience a similar drop we won't be able to cover our expenses to stay open and continue operating.
- 4) While works are being completed, ensure that there are regular intervals where people can cross the street from one side to the other.
- 5) Outline a plan for al fresco dining along the street once the works have been completed. It is important to retain the lively atmosphere which we currently have on Eat Street.
- 6) Guarantee that once the works are completed, businesses will retain the same size area of al fresco dining. Alternatively, outline if and how businesses who will have a reduced outdoor dining area can be compensated for the reduction. The al fresco dining areas and those seats have been a large factor for us having invested significant funds in our restaurants, and loss of prime seating would impact our businesses in future.
- 7) Tell us what will be happening with our al fresco shades. We have paid for these structures, will they be reused once works have been completed? If not, what will go in their place, and who would be funding the costs of new structures?
- 8) During the construction period, offer parking under 2-3 hours for free in the council owned Erby Street Car Park, and street parking within walking distance to our area, to encourage more visitors.
- 9) Our busiest days are Friday to Sunday, and busiest times each day is evenings for dinner. Commit to planning the timing of any works to minimize overlap with our busiest times.
- 10) Commit to organising more regular promotional events during the construction periods to attract people to our area. The Good Food Month Festival, Night Lanes, Winterlight Festival, have in the past boosted our trade and events such as this would help in the more difficult times during construction. However, focus on promoting our restaurants rather than bringing in so many competing food offerings.
- 11) Don't charge council rates during the construction period.

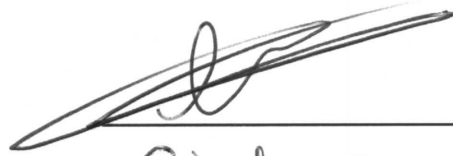
- 12) Use decorative hoarding and barriers (no wire fencing) for the construction period to make the area look less like a construction zone and more appealing.
- 13) Consult with representatives from the businesses in our area for feedback on decisions about organizing events in the area, and designs of hoarding/barriers and other ways to make our area look appealing during construction.
- 14) If possible, don't start construction on our street until Parramatta stadium has been built and is operating, as this will attract patrons to Parramatta.

Sincerely, Representatives from:

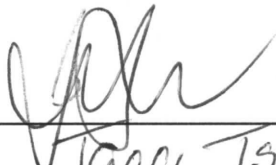
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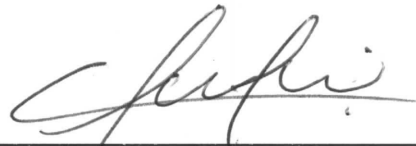
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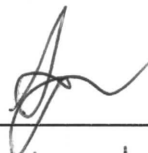
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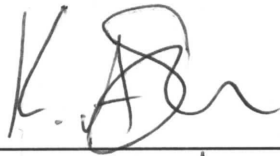
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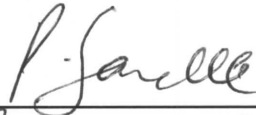
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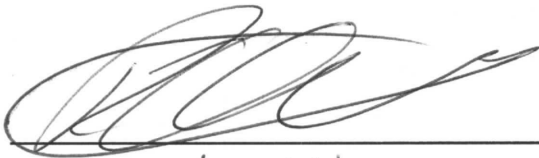
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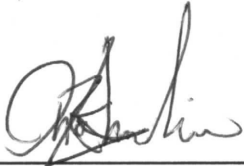
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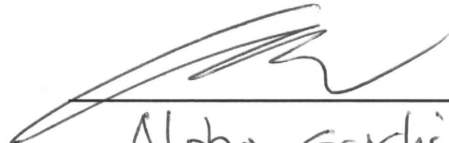
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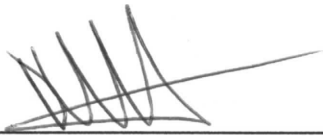
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