

Director, Transport Assessments, Planning Services
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW

Application SSI 7485

Dear Director,

I am a resident of Rozelle, living within 80m of the Rozelle Goods Yards site and am being impacted by the construction of the Rozelle interchange and will also be impacted by the construction of the proposed Vehicular overpass in Annandale.

I am, therefore, writing in relation to the proposed modifications to the M4-M5 Link, Mod 2; The Crescent Overpass and changes to pedestrian infrastructure in North Annandale, Rozelle and Rozelle Bay Foreshore area.

I request that the proposals for Mod 2 be re-worked.

There are a number of reasons why I am requesting that this Mod 2 needs to be totally re-worked.

1. The improvement in traffic flows appear to be insignificant in terms of addressing congestion in this area.
2. One of the very few good things that came out of the WestConnex project for residents around the Rozelle Goods Yards was the proposed Green link which would connect Rozelle and Annandale. And Mod 2 massively undermines this.
3. The traffic planning around the intersection of Johnson Street and the Crescent is so complex (bad) that, a magnified version of the map had to be supplied. If we need a magnified version, then the planners really need to go back to their drawing boards.
4. The proposed pedestrian plaza does not do the required job; that is, connecting Rozelle Goods Yards (park) with the foreshore of Rozelle Bay.
5. The 8-10 m high concrete overpass blocks views, broadcasts noise, breaks faith with residents and is contrary to the government's undertakings that the structure would be underground. It is not going too far to say that it will be an eyesore.

There are alternatives

Traffic Flows.

There appears to be deliberate obfuscation about traffic flows with the Mod 2 proposal. Most of the traffic flows around The Crescent/Western Distributor interchange were predicted in the EIS to be worse after the WestConnex project than they would have been without the WestConnex Project.

Here is what is said in the EIS, Pxi . "Where the project would connect to the existing road network, increased congestion is forecast in parts of Mascot, along Frederick Street at Haberfield, Victoria Road north of Iron Cove Bridge, Johnston Street at Annandale and on the City West Link".

To be clear, the “increased congestion” means that congestion will be worse on **completion** of the WestConnex project than it would have been **without** the WestConnex Project. So presumably the Mod 2 overpass has been proposed as a way of improving things.

However, the Mod 2 report only compares traffic flows the new overpass proposal with the traffic flows forecast in the EIS after completion of the WestConnex project. Mod 2 concludes that the new proposals won’t be much worse than those proposed in the EIS. (The implication being that, therefore, it will be worth installing the overpass).

However, the new proposals should be assessed on the original basis. (That is compare them with a “No-Westconnex scenario”). And, if this is done, then clearly, traffic flows will still be worse with WestConnex and the new overpass than they would have been without any WestConnex project.

So, even with the overpass, we will still have congestion at this intersection.

This sort of “tricky” analysis and deception is disappointing at best.

Increased traffic congestion

P8-126 of Environmental Impact Statement says “The AM peak citybound movements are forecast to continue to be affected by the queues back from the Bathurst Street/Cross City Tunnel off-ramp. In addition, the downstream exit blocking from Sydney Harbour Bridge on the Western Distributor also contributes to decreased performance and increased eastbound congestion on the Western Distributor. As a result, in spite of the improvement in network performance metrics, **the number of unreleased vehicles almost doubles when compared with the 2023 ‘without project’ network.** The congestion on the Western Distributor and Anzac Bridge is forecast to cause some queuing in the Iron Cove Link, and to a lesser extent on the M4 exit ramp. This is not forecast to extend back to the M4-M5 Link mainline tunnels.

With the forecast traffic demand, the merge of two lanes from City West Link and two lanes from Victoria Road into two lanes on the eastbound approach to Anzac Bridge **is forecast to cause significant queuing on City West Link.**

.....However, in the eastbound direction, the forecast demands increase significantly compared to the ‘without project’ scenario. As a result, the downstream capacity constraint at Sydney Harbour Bridge would **cause eastbound congestion on Western Distributor and Anzac Bridge. This is expected to cause significant delays across Anzac Bridge, with queuing extending back onto Victoria Road and City West Link.** This eastbound congestion partially offsets the improvements in the westbound direction; however, the overall network performance is expected to improve in the ‘with project’ scenario”.

The last sentence is just fanciful, wishful thinking when one reads the previous conclusions about increased congestion and travel times. It does not relate to the facts.

So, the \$20 billion project that was meant to reduce congestion will actually increase congestion over what would have happened without it. We can expect increased

congestion in virtually all the routes into the city; Anzac Bridge, City West Link, Victoria Road and the Ironcove tunnel.

Should we be pleased that the queues are “not forecast to extend back to the M4-M5 mainline tunnels”? Hardly. It does appear, however, that we could be faced with queues entirely filling many of the feeder tunnels and roads around Rozelle and Annandale. With almost stationary traffic in the tunnels we may be faced with poisoning problems from nitrous oxides and carbon monoxide in the tunnels. The ventilation systems cannot then rely on the piston effect of cars moving through the tunnels and we can expect increased pollution being vented through the stacks over the citizens of Rozelle. These are not acceptable outcomes from a major project designed to reduce congestion.

This should not come as a surprise. All the traffic experts said that by building freeways into the city that you would increase congestion.

The “Green link”

One of the very few good things that came out of the WestConnex project for residents around the Rozelle Goods Yards was the proposed Green link which would connect Rozelle and Annandale. It was wide and should allow bikes and pedestrians to intermingle. And it was direct. It provided access to school children transiting across the suburbs to their respective schools. It allowed access to bike riders and pedestrians to the foreshores of Rozelle Bay and the harbourside walks and was in keeping with the aim of the Precincts project of making something great around the foreshores, and harbour.

This green link is not an add-on. It is not a minor part of the design. It is a fundamental foundational part of the design. It’s about linking communities, It must be prioritised at the expense, if necessary, of road traffic flows.

Surely the planners can do better than this.

Additionally, the proposal for a very long, very high, shared pedestrian/bike overpass on the Eastern side, to Rozelle Bay foreshore will give access to the foreshore without having to negotiate ground level traffic lights but it has a lot of drawbacks: it effectively doubles the direct distance across the Western Distributor, it is relatively narrow, it is certainly not green, it is visually unattractive, because it is so high it blocks views to the bay, and it means a rather stiff climb for bikes and wheelchairs or elderly people.

In short, it is not an attractive alternative to the promised green link.

Traffic planning around Johnson Street

The traffic planning around the intersection of Johnson Street and the Crescent is so complex (bad) that, a magnified version of the map had to be supplied. See below.

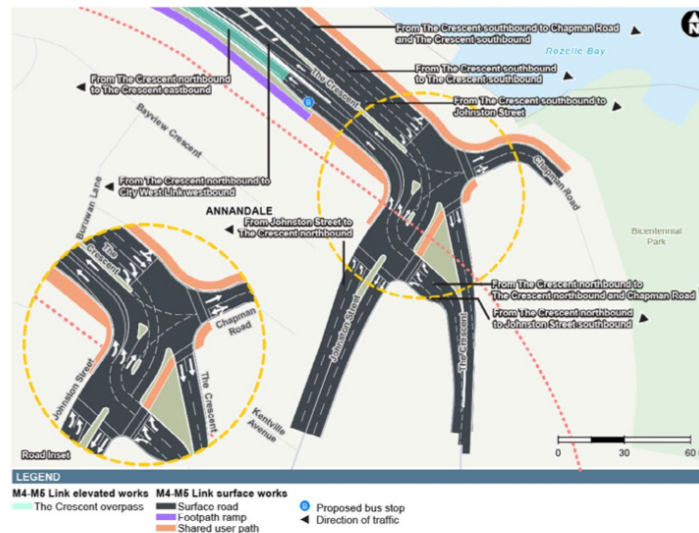


Figure 5: The Crescent/Johnston Street/Chapman Road intersection

If we need a magnified version, then the planners really need to go back to their drawing boards. A little more creativity is required. (Perhaps the brick pylon could be replaced with something smaller, for example). The ramifications for children trying to get from Rozelle to the Blackwattle Campus of Sydney Secondary College, or trying to get to Saint Scholastica school, Glebe, are that they will have to wait for multiple sets of traffic lights (maybe waiting for about 6 min in total)...or be tempted to “run” the lights.

Vehicles that currently have the option of turning right from Johnson Street into The Crescent will no longer have that option. We will still have the problem that traffic travelling north along The Crescent will not be able to see around the brick pylon that supports the light rail at this intersection.

Vehicles travelling north from Annandale will no longer be able to turn right into James Craig Drive.

So quite a lot of traffic flexibility will be lost.

The Plaza does not do the required job.

The proposed pedestrian plaza does not do the required job; that is, connecting Rozelle Goods Yards (park) with the foreshore of Rozelle Bay. It only goes half-way. It connects to the light rail...and that is certainly useful but it does not connect with the foreshores except via a rather tortuous pedestrian ramp and multiple sets of traffic lights...around that complex Johnson Street intersection with The Crescent. I note that there is provision for landscaping but it is certainly not shown in the Artists impressions.

The road overpass itself has many problems

The 10 m high concrete overpass blocks views, broadcasts noise, breaks faith with residents and is contrary to the government’s undertakings that the structure would be underground. It is not going too far to say that it will be an eyesore.

The 10m high concrete structure that will be the overpass destroys most of the “Green link” concept in one fell-swoop. It blocks direct access to the foreshores. It forms a massive physical and psychological barrier to connectedness.....and it’s not green. (If the

base of the structure is 8m above the Western Distributor, then the complete structure will stand about 10m above the lower road).

And, as noted above, it is not really a great solution to traffic congestion. Traffic flows will scarcely be any better with the overpass than without it. (According to the traffic modelling). And it will be worse than it would have been without WestConnex. Why? Because WestConnex will do (more or less) what it was designed to do.....bring more traffic into the inner city.....where it has nowhere to go but into suburbs like Annandale or onto Anzac Bridge....already at capacity.

Some suggested alternatives.

Re-jig the plaza

Assuming that there is an unwillingness by the contractors and by the government to substantially change the vehicular overpass, then maybe the proposed plaza can be re-jigged to do a better job.

If the plaza was extended, at the same width, into a ramp which reached over the lower end of the vehicular overpass....it could reach down to the foreshores.

It could be landscaped ...and thus green.

It would cater for both pedestrians and bikes.

It would deliver on the original promise of a green link direct to the foreshores.

It would provide an alternative to the ground level maze of traffic lights.

It would be much more direct than the proposed, winding shared overpass. (Perhaps this could be done away with altogether with this alternative proposal).

It would straddle the vehicular overpass at its lowest point.....so would not have to be so high itself.

It still provides direct access to the light rail from Rozelle...but also provides direct access to the foreshores and ferry wharf from the light rail.

It should also be possible to provide a shared ramp from the plaza level to Johnson Street and maybe the current site of Burawan park.

The attached diagram indicates what might be possible:

Reduce the traffic flows

As the problems of congestion at the intersection will really be because of WestConnex, another solution is to think about addressing the core issue.....increased traffic.

And this could be addressed by cancelling the cross harbour tunnel or increasing tolls, or banning cars without special licences (as is done in Singapore).

It can also be addressed by a significant investment in public transport...especially trains.

But the solution doesn't have to be building more concrete overpasses!

Do nothing

The traffic modelling shows that the overpass will make little difference to traffic flows anyway. So perhaps it might be simpler (and about as effective) to just stick with the situation set out in the EIS.

I trust that my objections and suggestions will be taken into account and given serious consideration.

Sincerely.

Lloyd Downey

Mob 0434 621 359

Email: Lloyd.downey@fastmail.com.au