



VILLAGE VOICE

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION NEWS BULLETIN

AUGUST, 1980

CRISIS IN OCEAN STREET

THE Queen Street and West Woollahra Association is deeply concerned that the traffic build up in Ocean Street is seriously undermining the amenity of the area and causing undue safety hazards.

Recent traffic developments have resulted in Ocean Street carrying 50 per cent through traffic.

However, it is not an arterial road and alternative through routes to the city are not being used to full capacity.

The association has recently taken these three steps on behalf of local residents to try to solve Ocean Street's traffic crisis:

- Commissioned a detailed study carried out by students of the Traffic Engineering Department at the University of New South Wales under Professor Ross Blunden who has given us some useful conclusions.
- Held a meeting with the Mayor of Woollahra, Alderman Donohoe, our ward aldermen and Council officers to emphasise the dissatisfaction of residents with the current situation and discuss methods of improving it. At the Council's request, we have evolved a series of practical suggestions which are printed in a panel on this page.
- Launched a survey to give all local residents the opportunity to voice their opinions on the traffic situation.

A survey form and free reply paid envelope are enclosed with this copy of Village Voice. We ask you to complete it and return it to us immediately, to enable us to tackle the authorities strongly on your behalf.

At the meeting with Council in June, the association was represented by its president, Tom Wilhelm; the vice-president, Robin Brampton; committee member Norman Prescott who has taken a special interest in traffic matters; and Julian Beaumont, a concerned Ocean Street resident.

... and how we think it should be tackled

IN our proposals to Woollahra Municipal Council for dealing with the traffic crisis in Ocean Street, we state that the main aim of the association and residents is to keep the street from becoming a main road.

We therefore suggest:

1. That the Council should clearly state to the traffic authority, the Department of Main Roads, that it wishes to retain authority for the maintenance of Ocean Street and further that the Council wishes Ocean Street to remain a local road.
2. In order to keep Ocean Street a local road, the following changes should be made:
 - (a) The Oxford Street traffic lights should be synchronised to entice some of the city bound expressway traffic to continue down Oxford Street.
 - (b) No further clearways or parking restrictions should be brought into effect along Ocean Street.
 - (c) No further widening should be carried out.
 - (d) The double turn lanes from the expressway into the southern end of Ocean Street be reduced to a single lane, as a very hazardous situation now exists.
 - (e) The double turn lanes at the northern (Edgecliff) end of Ocean Street should be separately marked. The outside lane should be marked "EDGECLIFF ROAD ONLY" and the inside lane "OCEAN STREET ONLY".
 - (f) The period when traffic lights are on green to allow traffic into Ocean Street at both ends should, if possible, be reduced slightly.
 - (g) At the York Road turning into Oxford Street, the kerb lane should be marked "LEFT INTO OXFORD STREET ONLY."

The association has put the above points also to the Department of Main Roads, but hopes that with the Council's backing they will have more likelihood of being implemented.

Paddington: thrombosis instead of strangulation

THE Great Paddington Traffic Fiasco ended none-too-soon on July 28 when Woollahra Council reopened the Hargrave Street-Gurner Street-Glenmore Road corridor to through traffic.

Instead of choking off the artery completely, Council decided to afflict it with thrombosis by recommending a series of stop signs to slow the journey.

It was our senior ward alderman, Tony Perry, who moved for the watering down of the scheme, saying it was "too general and too harsh".

The closures of Windsor and Sutherland Streets are being retained, thereby ironically putting more pressure on the central corridor than before the ill-conceived PATSYM scheme was introduced for a three-month trial.

And ominously for West Woollahra, it is being proposed that Trelawney Street should be closed off at Jersey Road, presumably to siphon more traffic into Ocean Street which is already bearing an unfair burden.

If the stop signs are the answer for Paddington, why a closure at Trelawney Street?

The scaling down of PATSYM followed a deluge of protest and industrial action, involving everyone from trade unions to businesspeople whose livelihood was threatened.

A strong outcry came from Paddington residents who decided the PATSYM cure was worse than the disease when they found themselves

scurrying about in bewilderment like mice in a laboratory maze.

They petitioned the Council for an end to PATSYM in even greater number than the original petitioners whose protests about traffic volume had given birth to the scheme.

Our own association added its voice to the protests, following the almost-unanimous decision of members at the annual meeting.

The view of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association is quite simply that all streets should bear their fair share of through traffic.

No area should expect to solve its traffic problems at the expense of another. This is clearly what happened in Paddington — and we were the principal sufferers.

"Autocratic decision"

One of the most eloquent and active supporters of the association's traffic viewpoint is Mr Julian Beaumont, of Ocean Street, who wrote an excellent protest letter to Woollahra Council.

"It is a source of astonishment to the residents of Ocean Street and adjoining streets that Council has taken the autocratic decision to restrict Paddington traffic flow without first having fully consulted all those residents within the municipality who would be so obviously adversely affected," said Mr Beaumont.

"Presumably, Council is aware that the PATSYM Report recognised that any traffic measures taken within the



Paddington precinct would adversely affect surrounding areas.

"... Council should remind itself that it is elected for the benefit of the municipality as a whole, and not for the benefit of a minority of residents who desire to have their near-city cake and eat it!"

And a former president of the Queen Street Association, Leo Schofield, who lives in Queen Street, comments:

"The lunacy of the Paddington road closure is now generally acknowledged ... except perhaps by those selfish residents who see a little personal profit deriving from these random, ill-planned and odious Council moves.

"I am happy for Queen Street to carry its fair share of traffic. And I'm sure Ocean Street residents feel much the same way about the street on which they live.

"But I am not prepared to be discriminated against, to have additional traffic pumped past my house while other ratepayers are suddenly granted Council protection from pollution.

"Paddington has no more right to preferential treatment than West Woollahra. Or, for that matter, Bexley.

"The sooner the good aldermen of Woollahra Council stop playing at being traffic policemen and apply their energies in more constructive directions, the happier we'll all be.

"The gigantic sum squandered on this laborious exercise would have been better spent on community services in the municipality.

"Such an application of ratepayers' money would, I feel, have received general approbation and might even have done a little for the Council's shabby image."

Less fair — more flair

Be prepared for big changes in Queen Street Fair this year.

A determined effort will be made to upgrade its visual quality, based on the fact that this year we are not dependent on the Fair to make money for the association's work, due to the very strong position of our finances.

Our aim will be to encourage the imaginative, the local and the charity or community service contributions, and to eliminate opportunist commercial stallholders whose only interest in the Fair is to make a bundle of money.

To this end, the Fair will be smaller in size.

We are cutting the number of kerbside

stalls to 40-50, and it is likely these will only be available to charity and community service applicants, local people or applicants who can really convince us that their presentation will be stunning.

The number of island stalls will be slightly increased to 140, but in this area also the committee intends to be very selective in granting stall applications.

Application forms for stalls will be available later this month from the Fair Secretary, Mrs Pixie Nolan, PO Box 16, Woollahra, NSW 2025. Phone 32 5282.

But we emphasise — if you are not planning to present a stall with some degree of flair, don't bother to apply.

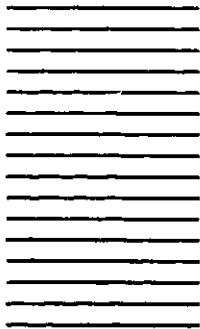
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**TRAFFIC SURVEY,
Queen Street and West Woollahra
Association
Box 16, P.O.,
Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025**



RESIDENTS TRAFFIC SURVEY

It will greatly assist the QUEEN STREET AND WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION in its efforts to press for a reduction in the flow of traffic through the neighbourhood generally and along Ocean Street in particular if you would complete this questionnaire and return it as soon as possible to PO Box 16, Woollahra, NSW 2025, using the enclosed reply paid envelope. NO STAMP IS NECESSARY. Survey forms may also be deposited in a box provided at Churchill's Butcher Shop, 132 Queen Street.

- In which street in West Woollahra do you live?

-
- Do you own a business in the area? Yes No

- Are you adversely affected by traffic? Yes No

- If the answer to the question is Yes, please describe briefly in what way you are affected?

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- Have you noticed any increase in through traffic since the introduction of the recent road closures in Paddington? Yes No

- Do you have difficulty parking outside your residence or place of business? Yes No

- Are you affected by traffic noise? Yes No

- Would you support moves to reduce the flow of traffic through West Woollahra? Yes No

- Would you support candidates for election to Council who promised alleviation of traffic burden?
Yes No

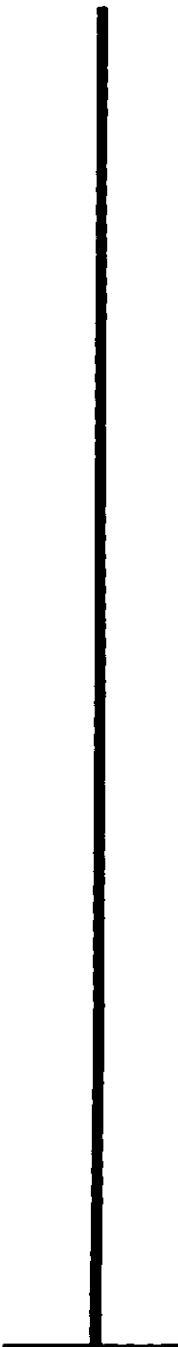
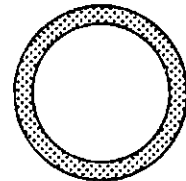
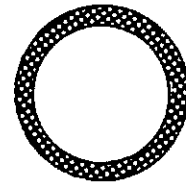
- Do you believe that your local ward aldermen have been active enough on your behalf in ensuring traffic controls? Yes No

- Have you any suggestions that you think might help alleviate present traffic problems? _____

-
- Any other comments? _____

Name: _____

Address: _____



Statement from ward aldermen

WE asked our three ward aldermen to give us a statement for VILLAGE VOICE indicating their views on the Ocean Street traffic situation. The following is the full text of their reply:

TOM Wilhelm, president of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association, has invited us, as the ward aldermen, to comment in advance on a story which is appearing in the current issue of THE VILLAGE VOICE as to an alleged lack of interest by Woollahra Council in the traffic problems of Ocean Street.

We believe it is important for the readers to know of the meeting held on June 11 last, which was chaired by the Mayor Alderman Frank Donohoe, attended by representatives of the association executive, the ward aldermen and Council staff.

At the meeting there was frank and friendly discussion as to the difficulties facing the residents of Ocean Street.

Among the issues canvassed were:

— The movement of traffic during the morning and evening peaks along the thoroughfare and between Oxford Street and the by pass road, and New South Head Road.

— The status accorded to Ocean Street by the Department of Main Roads.

— Congestion difficulties at Taylor Square, with a consequent encouragement for motorists to use the Ocean Street/New South Head Road route into the city.

— The possibility of having Edgecliff Road traffic, proceeding west towards the city, able to turn right into Ocean Street, near the major New South Head Road intersection.

At the meeting, agreement was reached for the association to put further written proposals to the Council, based upon the acceptance that the Council itself does not possess the necessary powers to change the traffic system for the road.

It was explained at the meeting that the road forms an integral part in the Department of Main Road's planning for traffic movements in the Eastern Suburbs.

Accordingly, any assistance which the Council could offer would necessarily be restricted to urging change upon the State Government departments involved.

Our agreement to this course of action was, of course, conditional upon the full Council agreeing with any written submissions made by the association.

We are presently still awaiting the submissions of the association as was agreed at the meeting and we are confident that upon the Association's proper consideration of the issues and their submissions, in writing, they will be given a sympathetic consideration, having regard to the limited powers available to the Council.

Alderman J. MacCallum

Alderman M. Piat

Alderman T. Perry

EDITOR'S NOTE: The association has now made the written proposals mentioned by the aldermen, and these are published on the first page of this newsletter. We make no allegations that Woollahra Council lacks interest in the traffic problems of Ocean Street, and look forward to seeing the Council's interest translated into what action does lie within its limited powers.

Crisis in Ocean Street

continued

Among the points we raised were:

- The 50 per cent of through traffic carried by Queen Street is too high for a feeder-collector road.
- As a result of Department of Main Roads encouragement, one third of city bound traffic from the Bondi Junction by-pass now turns down Ocean Street. This is unnecessary as Oxford Street could easily carry the traffic.
- Both Oxford Street and New South Head Road are below capacity and could carry more traffic.
- The noise level in Ocean Street has become intolerable to residents, and at increasingly late hours.
- The high volume of traffic directed into Ocean Street has created accident hazards at intersections.

At the meeting, Council representatives stressed considerably that their powers were limited, and the actual authority for traffic control rested with the Department of Main Roads.

However, the Council's recommendations must carry considerable weight,



else how did Paddington's controversial traffic strangulation ever take place?

Generally the Council gave us a receptive and even sympathetic hearing, which we hope augurs well for the proposals we have now made to them.

One of the interesting conclusions of Professor Blunden, based on the study by his students, is that Ocean Street could be closed to through traffic with little detriment to commuter traffic to the city.

He found it surprising that Ocean Street, which is not a gazetted main road, could be incorporated into a design and construction exercise by the Department of Main Roads.

It was also as the result of his findings that we discovered that one

third of city bound traffic from the new Bondi Junction by-pass turns into Ocean Street. It is this traffic that Ocean Street residents are finding a burden.

Despite the findings — and unlike the residents of Paddington — we are not proposing anything so radical and selfish as closing the street.

We have, however, put forward suggestions which we believe to be practical, reasonable and not unduly costly.

They would preserve the nature of Ocean Street until some upgrading of the arterial routes of Oxford Street and New South Head Road makes Ocean Street's present pseudo role as a "partial arterial road" redundant.

COMPROMISE REJECTED

The Queen Street and West Woollahra Association has rejected a compromise suggested by Woollahra Council's planning staff to our opposition to zoning proposals which would allow 18 m (six storey) residential development on two large sites on Oxford Street.

The compromise would reduce the upper height limit to 12 m in the Woollahra (West) Action Plan which is now being developed, and allow for 2(b) land use zoning.

One of the two sites includes properties on both sides of the junction of Wallis and Oxford Streets, and covers the Wallis Street roadway at this point.

The other is the "Diamond Horseshoe" site, covering a number of properties between James Street and the Park Inn.

Council suggests that the proposed zonings would allow off-street parking to be constructed at ground level rather than in an excavated basement, presumably with three floors above.

Expert advice

For two years the association has been opposing any exemptions from the 9.5 m height limit which would apply to the conservation zone in West Woollahra, on the grounds that the buildings would be out of scale and unsympathetic with the architectural character of the area.

We have rejected the Council's compromise suggestion on the advice of our town planning expert, Mr P. J. Devery, B Sc MTCF, who says the Council has supplied nothing which should make us change our opinion.

A slightly disturbing element which has arisen in the past few weeks is that a householder in the proposed "exempted" area of Wallis Street has received a letter from an organisation claiming to command a large cash budget and able to offer a top price to buy his home.

While we have accepted Woollahra Council's assertions that its proposals for the site have not been inspired by some particular property developer, we obviously have grounds for fearing that height exemptions might tempt a developer to move in and exploit the site in an unacceptable manner.

THE ASSOCIATION REPORTS . . .

What is happening at Helen Keller house, the fine Georgian residence off Queen Street rescued in the nick of time from the demolishers in 1973, but still unrestored?

Recently we had a chat with Dr Bill Kelly who bought the property from the Royal Blind Society and has now erected a group of town houses on the Woods Avenue side of the site.

Dr Kelly assures us that he still intends to go ahead with the restoration of the house but has been trying to persuade Woollahra Council to waive the \$12,000 "open space contribution" it required before issuing a certificate of compliance.

Our association strongly supports Dr Kelly in his contention that somebody who is prepared to undertake such a difficult, expensive and environmentally desirable restoration should not be penalised by the Council in this manner.

We intend to keep our eye on the situation and lend what weight we can to his plea.

☆ ☆ ☆

At our annual meeting in May, members pointed out that a large illuminated sign saying "PADDING-TON" which real estate agents Raine and Horne have placed outside their branch towards the top of Queen Street might cause confusion to visitors who rightly believe they are in West Woollahra.

A letter to Raine and Horne brought forth a courteous reply, inviting the association president to discuss the situation, but at the time of writing the sign had not been removed or changed.

☆ ☆ ☆

In the past few weeks, the charcoal-coloured "Cobblestone" pavement treatment of the Queen Street shopping centre has been extended to Halls Lane.

The association had a lot of influence in the choice of this particular type of pavement. We believe it fits the character of our "village high street", without being too fussy, and are pleased the Council has found the funds to give us more "Cobblestones" so quickly.

The Council has also told us that it plans soon to make considerable improvements to the Davies Reserve, at the Oxford Street end of Queen Street. We trust we will be consulted on the details in a similar way.

QUEEN STREET & WEST WOOLLAHRA ASSOCIATION

A residents' action association covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgecliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra, N.S.W. Affiliated to the National Trust.

Address: Box 16, P.O. Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025.

Subscription: \$3 a year. Life membership \$25.

Patron: Dame Joan Sutherland

President: Tom Wilhelm

Vice-President: Robin Brampton

Secretary: Monica McDonald

Treasurer: Mollie Lenthall

Committee: Jenny Fox, Douglas Gordon, Monica McDonald, Pixie Nolan, Grant Roberts, Norman Prescott, Leo Schofield

Chairman of the Architectural Committee: Douglas Gordon

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Mr Chris Pentland, of Mobili, the furniture importers at 38 Queen Street, has suggested to Woollahra Council that one-hour parking restrictions should be imposed in the area between 30 and 48 Queen Street to prevent cars being parked there all day, to the exclusion of shoppers.

Our association believes this is a reasonable request and has written to Mr Pentland in support.

☆ ☆ ☆

Several changes have occurred in the association's committee as the result of the annual meeting in May and following events.

Tom Wilhelm is now president, with last year's president Robin Brampton as vice-president. Monica McDonald, who has rejoined the committee, is the new secretary and the new treasurer is Mollie Lenthall.

Since the annual meeting, the committee has used its co-option powers to invite Jenny Fox, of Ocean Street to join the committee.

Jenny is vitally interested in the Ocean Street traffic question, and her support will be valuable at a time when the association is directing so much attention to this problem.