

ITEM 3.2. REMOVING THE CLEARWAY, IMPROVING PARKING AND AMENITY FOR BUSINESS AND RESIDENTS ON OXFORD STREET**FILE NO: S051491****MINUTE BY THE LORD MAYOR**To Council:

The NSW Government continues to impose peak period clearways on Oxford Street, with bus-only lane adjacent to the footpath. The clearways operate from 6am-10am in the westbound direction and 4pm-7pm in the eastbound direction.

These kerbside clearways mean that large volumes of high-speed traffic create a noisy and hostile environment for pedestrians, shoppers, diners and visitors. Kerbside parking provides a buffer between people and vehicles.

The clearways remove kerbside parking at a time when there are many people in the area who may wish to shop, eat or spend time on Oxford Street. They make the footpaths unpleasant at times when there are large volumes of commuters walking along Oxford Street who might choose to stop at one of the many cafés and shops.

Speeding vehicles also impact significantly on safety and amenity. I welcomed the State Government's announced 40km/h speed limit zone in central Sydney to improve pedestrian safety and support extending the zone along the Oxford Street shopping precinct. 40km/h speed limits already exist in many areas surrounding Oxford Street.

Research and community consultation with residents and business by both City of Sydney and Woollahra Council have identified the removal of the clearway as an essential part of revitalising Oxford Street.

Oxford Street is a shopping precinct with high heritage value and the capacity to service local residents' needs. However, noisy, fast-moving through traffic makes it is unpleasant to be there.

The opening of the Eastern Distributor in 1999 and the Cross City Tunnel in 2005 provided alternative roads and directed traffic away from Oxford Street. These changes provided the opportunity to remove the clearway on Oxford Street.

As Lord Mayor and formerly the Member for Bligh/Sydney, I have repeatedly asked the NSW Government to remove to the Oxford Street clearway.

The current Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich MP, has also petitioned the Roads and Freight Minister to remove the Oxford Street clearway.

The Paddington Business Partnership and resident groups have long supported removal of the clearway. The current trial of reduced clearway hours, commencing at 4pm rather than 3pm, has not caused traffic problems.

Local business owner Sue Ritchie recently said that the removal of on-street parking to make space for the clearway was "unfair disadvantage to small businesses."

The City of Sydney has invested millions of dollars to help revive Oxford Street, including upgrading footpaths; installing new lighting, providing seating and greenery; investing in new public art and using Council-owned property for creative and affordable workspaces. Some of the new galleries, artist studios and start-up creative enterprises, specialising in everything from textiles to mobile app development, have won major national awards, while giving tens of thousands of people a reason to visit this precinct and contribute to its diversity and vibrancy.

Effective management of our roads and high streets means we must find the best option for residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

The current clearway and speed limit on Oxford Street do not deliver a balanced solution. It prioritises fast traffic movements over parking, pedestrian safety and amenity, and the needs of local businesses.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council ask the Lord Mayor to write to NSW Minister for Roads and Freight, Duncan Gay, requesting:

- (A) the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) remove the Oxford Street clearway and introduce a 40 km/h speed limit on Oxford Street; and
- (B) the RMS, City of Sydney and Woollahra Council investigate relocating the existing bus lane to a centre lane.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor