



THE LORD MAYOR OF SYDNEY  
**CLOVER MOORE**

08 NOV 2018

The Hon. Melinda Pavey MP  
Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

### **Optimising Pedestrian Movement in Central Sydney**

Every day thousands of people walk around central Sydney throughout the day and night. The City of Sydney's pedestrian counts show that more than 100,000 people walk along George Street near Wynyard each day, and nearly 50,000 walk around Railway Square and along Park Street and Market Street. If this many people were travelling by car, the NSW Government would be widening roads to keep them moving, yet the needs of people walking are ignored.

At the City of Sydney Council meeting on 17 September 2018, councillors unanimously supported the need for actions to reduce pedestrian delays and crowding in the City. The City requests that Roads and Maritime Services:

- Expands 90-second signal phasing to the whole City of Sydney local government area (LGA), focusing on intersections in the City villages
- Revises its policies for signal plans to increase priority for pedestrians, consistent with the relevant NSW Government strategies and policies
- Reviews the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System (SCATS) to support the NSW Government's 'movement and place' policy in relation to better serving pedestrians
- Installs automatic pedestrian phases at all times of the day and night, and on all signals in the city centre, with shorter wait times when the actuator button is pressed
- Installs countdown timer indicators at all appropriate major intersections in the City of Sydney LGA and on all new pedestrian signals
- Installs speeding and red-light cameras at all intersections in the city centre to improve safety in this high-pedestrian area.

In 2013 the *Sydney City Centre Access Strategy* recognised walking as the dominant mode of travel in central Sydney, with 1.15 million walking trips each day – 92 per cent of all trips – and this is set to grow. Around 100,000 new residents settled in Sydney in the past year, as did more than 35,000 international students. About four million international tourists now visit annually and around 25,000 people live in the CBD.

In central Sydney the number of people walking far exceeds the number of other transport users on the street. Crowding problems are severe at signalised intersections, where flows of people walking are stopped as they wait to cross, and long signal cycles mean substantial build-up of pedestrians. The light rail and Sydney Metro will compound existing pedestrian crowding issues, and before long intersection crowding will become dangerous and unsafe.

SCATS is sophisticated technology that has been adapted by Dublin City Council to provide extra and extended pedestrian crossing times. In Australia, where SCATS was developed, the full potential of the technology should be used to improve outcomes for pedestrians.

Delaying thousands of pedestrians every day also has economic implications. A 2017 Auckland study, *Measuring Pedestrian Delay* commissioned by Auckland Council, found pedestrians potentially face more than \$10 million worth per year of time delays at four intersections in Auckland as a result of car-centric signal timing. In addition to the economic consequences there are significant safety impacts, as people ignore the traffic lights to cross the roads. The NSW Government needs to take action to meet its Road Safety Plan and *Future Transport 2056* target, which aims to have zero trauma in the transport network by 2056.

The City of Sydney has put in place a number of initiatives to improve walking connectivity by making lanes safe and interesting, facilitating through-site links and installing pedestrian crossings. The NSW Government now needs to play its part by addressing the requests made by councillors at Council's meeting in September.

I have enclosed a copy of the Council resolution. If you or your staff would like to speak to a Council officer about this, please contact Sebastian Smyth, Executive Manager – City Access and Transport, on 9246 7703 or at [ssmyth@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ssmyth@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Clover Moore  
**Lord Mayor of Sydney**

Encl.

## Resolution of Council

**17 September 2018**

### **Item 12.4**

#### **Pedestrian Signals**

Moved by Councillor Thalys, seconded by Councillor Scully -

It is resolved that Council:

(A) note:

- (i) that walking is an efficient, healthy, safe and sustainable form of transport in urban areas, both for short trips and to access public transport;
- (ii) walkable urban areas increase economic activity, add value to real estate and provide a more equitable use of public space;
- (iii) walking accounts for 92 per cent of all trips within the Sydney city centre and people waiting on the footpath outnumber vehicles waiting at many intersections;
- (iv) Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is responsible for traffic signals and by their operation they generally give priority to motor vehicles over pedestrians;
- (v) reduced pedestrian waiting times reduce footpath crowding, encourage compliance with signals and can improve worker productivity;
- (vi) research by Transport for NSW in 2011 showed that pedestrians wait on average 50 per cent longer than motor vehicles at intersections in the city centre;
- (vii) Transport for NSW recently reduced signal phase lengths at most City Centre intersections from 110 seconds to 90 seconds with a marked reduction in pedestrian wait times and no measurable impacts on traffic operations;
- (viii) pedestrians are poorly served by the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System (SCATS), which is currently programmed to respond to motor vehicles, generally by reducing crossing time for pedestrians; and

- (ix) in Central Sydney, pedestrians won't get a green signal without pressing the activator button outside the daytime (7.00am to 7.00pm Monday to Wednesday, but until 9.30pm Thursday to Saturday); and
- (B) request the Lord Mayor write to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight requesting:
  - (i) expansion of the 90 second signal phasing to the whole City of Sydney local government area, with a focus on intersections within the City Villages;
  - (ii) revised RMS policies for signal plans to increase priority for pedestrians consistent with NSW Government strategies and policies, especially increased pedestrian phase time at intersections with high levels of pedestrian activity;
  - (iii) a review of the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System to support the NSW Government's "movement and place" policy in relation to improvements or alternatives to better serve pedestrians;
  - (iv) all signals in the city centre include automatic pedestrian phases at all times and shorter wait times when the actuator button is pressed;
  - (v) countdown timer indicators to be rolled out at all appropriate major intersections within the City of Sydney, including all new pedestrian signals; and
  - (vi) installation of speeding and red-light speed cameras at all intersections in Central Sydney to improve safety in areas of intense pedestrian activity.

Carried unanimously.

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