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The Director  
Centennial Parklands Draft Transport  
Access & Parking Plan  
Locked Bag 15  
PADDINGTON NSW 2021  
**Via Fax (02) 9360 5412**

Dear Sir or Madam

**RE: CENTENNIAL PARK CYCLISTS**

As a road cyclist who trains as part of the training group of cyclists in Centennial Park I make the following submissions relating to the draft Centennial Parklands Transport, Access & Parking Plan. I believe the submissions made herein represent the views of road cyclists training in Centennial Park.

1. In 1994 in respect of a proposed Traffic Management Plan submitted by the then Director of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust, Robin Grimwade, (the implementation of which was rejected by Randwick Council) it was estimated that 500,000 cyclists use the park every year. If each of the 500,000 estimated cyclists traveled an average of 5 laps of Grand Drive, this would amount to a distance traveled by cycles of 10,000,000 kilometres over a year. Cyclists' use of the park has increased since 1994. The significance of this matter is:
  - (i) Cyclists are the single largest identifiable user group of the park.
  - (ii) Incident reports in relation to cycling should be looked at in the light of these figures.
2. Centennial Park is the only place that elite cyclists in Sydney can train in a group with a reduced exposure to motor vehicle traffic and the accompanying danger that same entails. Cyclists from clubs all over the city come together regularly to train, on weekdays only, between 5.45 am and 7.00 am and 4.30 pm and 6.00 pm, when there is little motor vehicle traffic or competing use of the roadway. These cyclists comprise men and women from all walks of life, from all professions, from the business community, from varying trades and most importantly juniors (under 18) some of whom are still at school. More than 80% of

the cyclists who train in groups are licensed through their clubs with the New South Wales Cycling Federation.

3. The Draft Transport Plan sees groups of training cyclists in the park as a nuisance problem rather than as an identifiable user group that the park authorities have to cater for as one of the identifiable user groups operating in the Park since Federation. The public information in relation to the Draft Transport Access Plan speaks of concerns and attempts to limit “pack” cycling, on Grand Drive, a pejorative term invented by the 1994 report, stereotyping cyclists training in groups, as unconcerned with safety and public interest issues. In fact the contrary is the case. The preferred option of the training cyclist, between those limited hours referred to above, is to use the roadway system on Grand Drive and to share it with motor vehicles as cycle safety is severely compromised by being forced to mix in, in the cycle lane, with pedal carts, wheelchair athletes, scooters, skaters, skiing training and other activities which are conducted in the so-called cycle lane.
4. The Draft Transport Access & Parking Plan insofar as it proposes a layout for Grand Drive with parallel parking on the outside and contra-flow cycle lane on the inside perimeter is a proposal which has obviously been created by someone who has had no experience as a training cyclist or who has had to mix such similar cycling activity with other user groups in the cycle lane. This proposal is undesirable and will produce no beneficial effects for the following reasons:
  - (i) The space **currently** occupied and used by vehicular traffic on Grand Drive including cyclists will have to be divided between three uses:
    - (a) parked cars;
    - (b) vehicular traffic; and
    - (c) contra-flow cycle lane.
  - (ii) There is no demonstrated benefit in having cars parked on the outside perimeter of Grand Drive. There is no visible evidence to suggest that parking on the inside perimeter has caused damage to trees or tree roots or that the same is likely to occur. If damage to tree roots on the inside perimeter to Grand Drive is a concern this can be alleviated by plantation of low level shrubs and perimeter confinement as used in other urban parking situations. There is no reason to reduce the available width of Grand Drive for the purposes of parking which will have the effect of increasing the hazards by reducing the roadway width.
  - (iii) The proposed contra-flow cycle lane as far as a traffic management proposal is concerned would fall into the category of a disaster waiting to happen. It changes the recreational cyclists situation from one where they can comfortably pursue their activity minding their own business as at present, to one where they have to dodge other users of the cycle lane in the face of oncoming traffic on a two way street on a reduced area, where an error in the face of oncoming traffic could very well lead to a fatality. It is common to see joggers with unrestrained dogs using the current cycle lane. A car driver or cyclist, who makes an error travelling at 30 kilometres an hour in opposite directions would lead to an impact speed of 60 kilometres an hour, to which an exposed cyclist could be subjected. The reduced width of the traffic way would be less than a two way street, with the consequence that it would be safer for a cyclist to train on the public road system than in Centennial Park. It is interesting to note that the Centennial Park Regulations of 1889 contemplated that cyclists would ride on the drives laid out in the park and that no cyclist or person on roller skates would be allowed on any of the footways. It has been a safe haven to cyclists ever since.
5. The safety of the cyclists will not be compromised if they are travelling in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic and they have the space of the roadway. The only competing

user of the roadway system would then be the car drivers themselves. Due to the limited time that training cyclists actually use the park, during weekdays, it would not be unreasonable for Grand Drive to be made a cyclists' priority road between the hours outlined in point 2 above on weekdays with appropriate signage to that effect. As these times approximate to the times of sunrise and sunset, at which time the park gates are generally closed, it would be easy to limit Centennial Park being used as a thoroughfare for motor cars if at these times, only the Paddington main gate is allowed to remain open. This would have the added safety benefit such that vehicles which enter or leave the Park will not have to do so from Grand Drive and queue thereon but would necessarily be diverted to the main gate on Parkes Drive.

6. In the Centennial Parklands Annual Report (2000) the Honourable Bob Carr MP, Premier of New South Wales, remarked that "*The Trust should also be congratulated for its work in preparing for the staging of Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games in the Parklands. I am confident that the Olympic and Paralympic Road Cycling and Marathon events will be celebrated into the future as yet another dimension of the evolving parklands' heritage and Sydney's civic history.*" The current proposals constituted by the Draft Transport Access & Parking Plan are contrary to the parklands' heritage and Sydney's civic history, obviously designed to get rid of training cyclists pedalling around Grand Drive, which will be mourned in the future by the predominant user group in the Park whose interest the Trust should be protecting. The proposed cost of implementing the main actions contained in the draft plan of \$5.04 million plus a requirement for additional funding in the future and the raising of revenue by paid parking requires huge public expenditure to create structures and infrastructure changes which will provide no public benefit to legitimate users of the park who were part of the Park's heritage and tradition long before the current bureaucracy was created to administer this amenity.
7. The cyclist sees the vice of the draft plan as bringing about a reduced amenity for public purposes. The public interest is best served by having a proper traffic management policy arrived at through genuine consultation rather than imposed infrastructure changes requiring a large bureaucracy and large expenditure.
8. The cyclist sees a need to maintain the current use of Grand Drive as it is in its present state as essential to preserving the amenity and the safety of cyclists in the Park.

Yours faithfully

**SAMUEL Y REUBEN**

