

Cameron Avenue West – What happened to my road?

By Robert Newman, Traffic Representative, APA Executive

Imagine you are driving to work and suddenly you find the road you drive down every day has been closed off. Your first thought is likely to be – “Why didn’t anyone tell me?” followed closely by “Why would council do that?”

Readers who live on the eastern side of the station would have noticed that “Cameron Avenue West” (CAW) has been closed at the Tindale Rd intersection to traffic entering from Elizabeth St. Like most people, the first the APA heard of the closure was when the barricades went up.

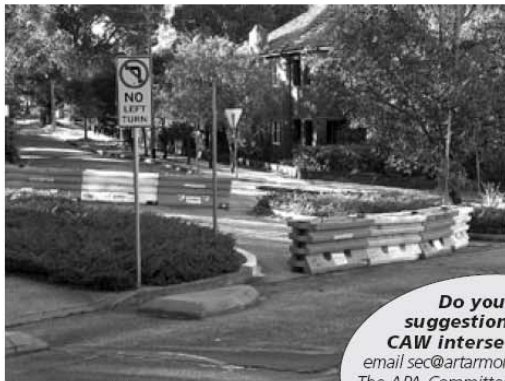
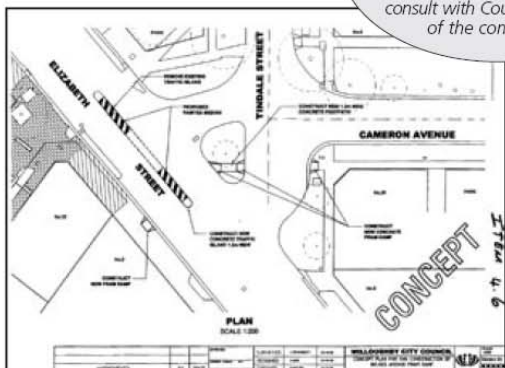


Photo: the trial closure at Cameron Ave West



Do you have suggestions for the CAW intersection? If so, email sec@artarmonprogress.org.au. The APA Committee would like your feedback and will continue to consult with Council on behalf of the community.

So what’s going on?

Willoughby has a Traffic Committee (TC) that meets monthly to discuss and address traffic issues raised by Council and constituents within the area. The agenda and minutes of these meetings are available from the council website.

The TC is not a Committee of WCC but a Technical Committee of the RTA and comprises representatives of the NSW Police Service, the RTA, the Local State Member of Parliament (for the location of the issue to

be voted upon) and WCC. Council has no power over roads that are responsibility of the RTA, and in fact one may suspect that the RTA doesn’t even need to advise the TC of any changes to RTA roads in the area (but currently does). Council has been delegated certain powers, from the RTA, with regard to traffic matters upon its local roads. A condition of this delegation is that Council must take into account the TC recommendations.

Council had received a number of requests back in 2006 for the informal path on the traffic island to be concreted, and Council Officers had also expressed concerns about pedestrian safety in the area. As a result, planned changes to the intersection were presented in November at the TC meeting. These original

plans had pedestrian movement from the south side of Cameron Ave, to “The Island”, to the southern end of a proposed new traffic island then to the western side of Elizabeth St (see graphic). The RTA advised that the plans were not in accordance with their safety standards and was concerned about the number of pedestrians who move between the corner/bend between Elizabeth St and Tindale Rd across CAW, cars that use “The Island” as a turn-around bay when dropping people at the Kiss & Ride at the station, and the gap in the proposed traffic island to allow northbound vehicles on Elizabeth St to turn into CAW.

A check of the TC minutes from the May 16 meeting reveals that the CAW issue was raised in General Business i.e. not on the agenda. It was recommended that a six week trial closure of the u-turn bay in Tindale Rd at Elizabeth St be implemented. As a result, the barriers were erected to see what feedback would come from the community, with the thought of replanning the traffic (both pedestrian and vehicle) through this area. WCC also considered that they may have to take the point off the southern end of “The Island” to improve access to Cameron Ave from Elizabeth St if CAW was to become a permanent closure in the future.

James Brocklebank, WCC Transport Group Coordinator, was invited to attend the July APA Executive Meeting. James confirmed that the trial closure has caused some controversy, and that he had received feedback from a number of residents and groups about the corner. This included feedback from the Artarmon Sustainability Street group, which referred to its previous submission to the Artarmon Library Masterplan, and suggested that any developments “improve access and safety for pedestrians... reduce traffic speeds along Elizabeth St past Wilkes Ave and the Library... (and) provide high quality access for cyclists, ...prams and wheelchairs to and through this area”.

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Possible “solutions” for the corner which were discussed at the APA meeting include:

- **Option A** – join “The Island” to the corner of Elizabeth St and Tindale Rd and take the point off “The Island” to facilitate turning of south bound traffic from Elizabeth St into Tindale Rd.
- **Option B** – join “The Island” to the corner of Elizabeth St and Cameron Ave and make Tindale Rd give way to Cameron Ave.
- **Option C** – make CAW one way east-bound, and Tindale Rd (south of Cameron

Ave) one way southbound, thus keeping the turning bay in relatively the same position.

The APA Committee believes that any solution for this area needs to address the requirements of:

- pedestrians walking to the station
- travellers being dropped/collected at the station – ie. retention of the Kiss & Ride facility
- residents driving through the area
- shoppers wishing to park near the Artarmon shops
- the taxi rank.

At the same time, we also need to consider any longer term issues for the area. Gil Davis, formerly of HomeTraders, has, for example, long held a vision for this whole area down to the end of the library to be turned into a ‘Village Green’ and community open space. “The community might like to think about the fact that the Council plans to build a new library on the existing site in the medium term. In looking at solutions for this corner, it would be a shame for the Council to spend money on works which would make them reluctant, or it impossible, to consider other options for this area in the longer term”, Gil said. ■