

DON'T CLOSE HAMPDEN RD

by Peter Wilton



'Least overall impact to residents?' A recent example of works on Hampden Rd / Photos courtesy P. Bassarov

Despite strong opposition, Transport for NSW has kept their plans to lay a new rail power cable under one of Artarmon's most popular streets.

In response to submissions made by Artarmon residents, Transport for NSW advised that the route under Artarmon roads remains their preferred course. This route includes Hampden Rd. In turn, Hampden road will require partial closure for an extended period.

The closure of Hampden Rd will cause significant disruption and economic loss to the Artarmon Village businesses as they rely on passing traffic for trade.

Transport for NSW's Principal Manager for Ministerial & Government Services, Mr T McSweeney, wrote in a letter to residents, that the route under Hampden Rd would have, "the least overall impact on residents."

Many Artarmon residents are astounded by this statement as there are four other alternate routes that do not involve closing Hampden Rd. One of these alternate routes uses Transport for NSW's existing rail corridor.

Artarmon Progress Association, and Artarmon Village Inc: the association of Hampden Rd retailers, have started a campaign against Transport for NSW's plan to close Hampden Rd.

The "Don't Close Hampden Rd" campaign is collecting names on a

petition that will be sent to Minister Andrew Constance. Concerned residents can sign this petition at most of the Hampden Rd shops.

Nick Logan, Artarmon Village Inc. spokesperson, said:

"When I read the reply from Transport for NSW I thought it was a joke. Their preferred option is the worst choice for the residents and the community. It was clearly chosen without local consultation and with no understanding of the arterial nature of Hampden Rd. Hampden Rd provides essential access to Artarmon Public School and Royal North Shore Hospital."

Logan also encourages the public to support the campaign. "I would encourage everyone to sign the petitions ASAP urging Transport NSW to reconsider their decision," he said.

Christine Kelley, Artarmon Progress Association President, said:

"The letter from Transport for NSW makes the ludicrous statement that their preferred plan involving the closure of Hampden Rd has a lower impact than other routes which include one using the existing rail corridor. Their statement belongs in the realm of "Yes, Minister" and not 2016 Sydney."

Regardless of which is the best route for Transport for NSW's new power cable, there is the larger question of whether it is needed in the first place? The planned power cable will provide

power to the Epping to Chatswood line, a train line that already exists and is powered by existing Transport for NSW power infrastructure.

In the event that a new power cable is needed, Transport for NSW has not considered using a temporary power solution whilst the new metro tunnel is being built and laying the power cable within this tunnel. The new tunnel will run from the Chatswood metro line to within 100 metres of the Artarmon power substation.

Without adequate answers to these questions, Transport for NSW's planned power cable under Artarmon roads will appear to be an example of "gold plated" infrastructure that is over-engineered and more expensive than otherwise needed.

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