

5.3. Jacaranda Season – McDougall Street, Kirribilli

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ATTACHMENTS: Nil

PURPOSE:

This report has been prepared in response to the resolutions of Council of 27 September 2021 (Item 8.12 Jacaranda Season) with regard to traffic and pedestrian management in McDougall Street, Kirribilli during the annual jacaranda blooming season.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Each year between September and November the jacarandas that line both sides of McDougall Street in Kirribilli come into flower for a period of approximately 6 weeks. This seasonal occurrence which generally peaks around mid-November has become a growing attraction for local North Sydney residents and tourists in recent years who wish to photograph themselves amongst the jacarandas which form a spectacular flowering avenue for the length of McDougall Street adjacent to Milson Park.

At the Council of 27 September 2021 (Item 8.12 Jacaranda Season) Council resolved:

1. **THAT** Council undertakes the crowd management actions identified within the report for the 2021 Jacaranda flowering season in McDougall Street.
2. **THAT** Council staff identify suitable locations for further Jacaranda Street tree plantings within the streets of Kirribilli, consult with the community and undertake additional planting where possible.
3. **THAT** Council increase the number of Jacaranda in Kirribilli through offering residents through the month of November the opportunity to receive a of small Jacaranda tree from Council if they are prepared to plant it on their property. Number of trees limited to 300.
4. **THAT** post the COVID 19 pandemic Council considers opportunities to promote and celebrate Jacaranda season in Kirribilli.

This report has been prepared in response to the resolutions of Council detailing the crowd management actions for the 2022 Jacaranda flowering season in McDougall Street.

Crowd control and associated public safety issues in McDougall Street over the last 2 Jacaranda flowering seasons has not been an issue due to the COVID-19 Pandemic public health orders that have been in place, restricting public gatherings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The cost of crowd management activities identified for the six-week Jacaranda season in McDougal Street is approximately \$6,000 and will be funded between Traffic Operation and Environmental Services. The budget breakdown is as follows:

- \$500 for Council owned VMS,
- \$1000 for Temp directional Footpath,
- \$3000 for Hire of 3 porta loos and
- \$1100 for cleaning of porta loos and park toilets

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council undertakes the crowd management actions identified within the report for the 2022 Jacaranda flowering season in McDougall Street by ways of:

- a. Installation of Council-owned Variable Message Sign (x2) to provide safety messaging stating *"Slow Down"* and *"Watch out for Pedestrians"*.
 - b. Temporary directional footpath signage by installation of pavement stickers stating *"Take care, be Car Aware"* as implemented during the Jacaranda season in 2019.
- 2. THAT** Council notes the cost of the crowd management activities identified in the financial implications of this report.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment
 - 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities
2. Our Built Infrastructure
 - 2.2 Vibrant public domains and villages
 - 2.4 Efficient traffic mobility and parking
4. Our Social Vitality
 - 4.2 A centre for creativity and learning

BACKGROUND

Each year between September and November the Jacarandas that line both sides of McDougall Street in Kirribilli come into flower for a period of approximately 6 weeks. This seasonal occurrence which generally peaks around mid-November has become a growing attraction for local North Sydney residents and tourists in recent years who wish to photograph themselves amongst the jacarandas which form a spectacular flowering avenue for the length of McDougall Street adjacent to Milson Park.

At the Council meeting on 25 November 2019 (MM01, Minute 325) Council resolved:

1. **THAT** Council staff prepare a report on options for managing the impact of visitors in McDougall Street, Kirribilli.
2. **THAT** the options include traffic management, the provision of additional amenities or services, multilingual communications and the feasibility of holding a full day festival; and
3. **THAT** an estimate of costs for each option be provided

A report was prepared and presented to the Council's meeting dated 23 March 2020 in response to the resolutions of Council to outline measures that Council has implemented in previous seasons and the feasibility of additional measures in the future for Council's consideration.

THAT Council, taking into consideration the financial implications, proceed with the following measures for the 2020 Jacaranda season:

- Option 1b Stop/slow control during the peak of the season for 4 weeks x 7 days.
- Option 2 Multi-lingual communications.
- Option 4a Installation of three (3) port-a-loos in Milson Park for two weeks.
- Option 4b Installation of six (6) additional temporary garbage bins for rubbish and recyclables in Milson Park for two weeks.

At the meeting, Council resolved:

THAT this matter be deferred until July 2020, given the current COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions on public gatherings.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions on public gatherings, the matter was postponed for another year where a report was presented at the Council's meeting of 27 September 2021 (Item 8.12 Jacaranda Season) resolving:

1. ***THAT Council undertakes the crowd management actions identified within the report for the 2021 Jacaranda flowering season in McDougal Street.***
2. ***THAT Council staff identify suitable locations for further Jacaranda Street tree plantings within the streets of Kirribilli, consult with the community and undertake additional planting where possible.***
3. ***THAT Council increase the number of Jacaranda in Kirribilli through offering residents through the month of November the opportunity to receive a of small Jacaranda tree from Council if they are prepared to plant it on their property. Number of trees limited to 300.***
4. ***THAT post the COVID 19 pandemic Council considers opportunities to promote and celebrate Jacaranda season in Kirribilli.***

This report has been prepared in response to the resolutions of Council detailing the crowd management actions (resolution 1) for the 2022 Jacaranda flowering season in McDougall Street.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

Relates to ECM No: 8695651

Standard or Guideline Used: N/A

Signs & Lines Priority: N/A

Precinct and Ward: Bradfield / Victoria

Impact on Bicycles: N/A

Impact on Pedestrians: Pedestrians are likely blocking traffic on McDougall Street while taking photographs.

Impact on Parking: Two (2) on-street parking spaces are unlikely removed temporary, to accommodate for the two Variable Message Signs (VMS) stating "Slow Down" and "Watch out for Pedestrians".

DETAIL

Each year between September and November the Jacarandas that line both sides of McDougall Street in Kirribilli come into flower for a period of approximately 6 weeks. This seasonal occurrence which generally peaks around mid-November has become a growing attraction for local North Sydney residents and tourists in recent years who wish to photograph themselves amongst the jacarandas which form a spectacular flowering avenue for the length of McDougall Street adjacent to Milson Park.

Over recent years, Council has received requests from members of the community concerning the increasing number of visitors to McDougall Street during the jacaranda flowering season.

The subject of the requests is mostly concerned with public safety, traffic and parking management and streetscape amenity.

While many members of the community have welcomed visitors to the area, some have requested that Council implement management strategies to address the safety and amenity concerns, while still enabling everyone to enjoy the spectacle. Some of the typical concerns that are raised include:

- Visitors and tourists blocking traffic on McDougall Street while taking photographs.
- Frequent honking of car horns from motorists attempting to move pedestrians on.
- Increase in number of tourist buses travelling through and parking on local streets.
- Visitors using bathroom facilities at local businesses in peak periods due to limited capacity of public toilets in Milson Park

Historical Monitoring

Traffic and Speed Data 2018

Monitoring of pedestrian, traffic and parking conditions was undertaken in 2018 before, during and after the jacaranda blooming season to analyse the extent of the issues raised. Traffic counts were carried out in June 2018 and over 9 weeks starting from the last week of October 2018. Traffic volumes peaked in November with volumes in the order of 2,500 vehicles per day, compared to 1,992 vehicles per day in June. Generally, the 85th percentile vehicle speeds decreased slightly with increasing traffic volumes, ranging from 31.8km/h during peak traffic to 41km/h with lower traffic volumes.

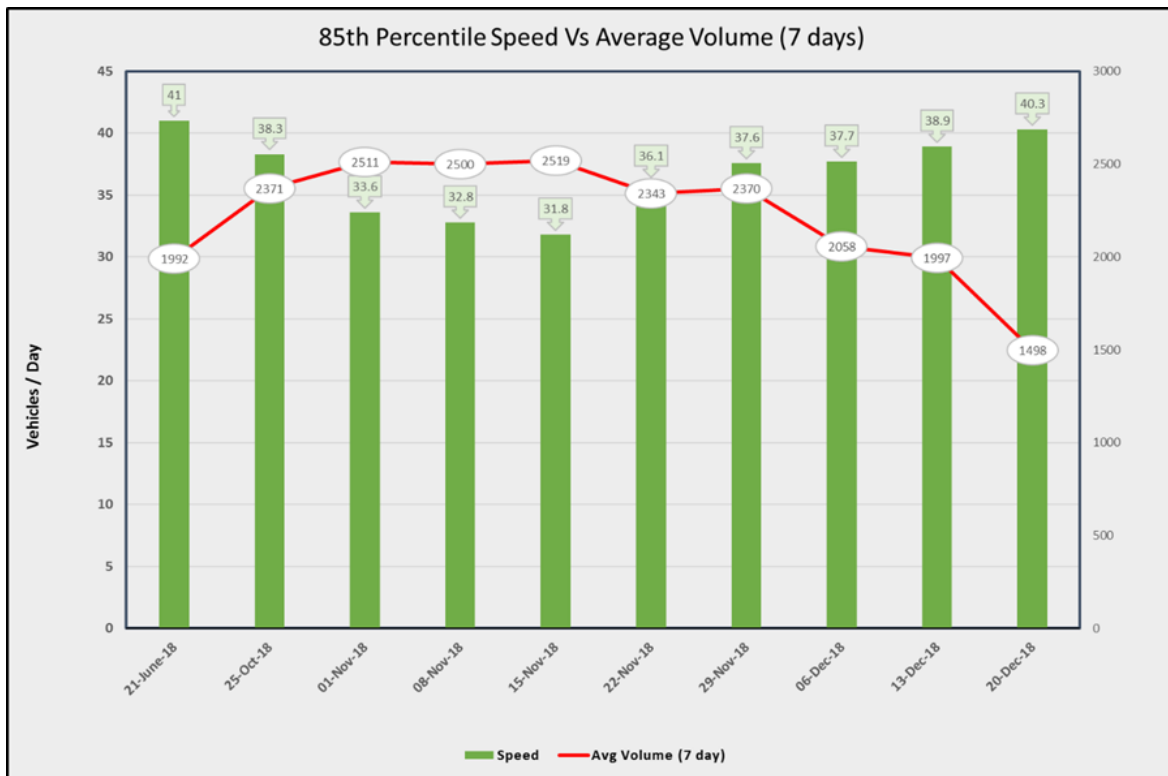


Figure 1. Traffic volume and speed data 2018

CCTV Observations - 2018

A mobile CCTV camera was installed in McDougall Street in early November 2018. Footage between 4/11/18-6/11/18 was reviewed by Council’s Communications Officers during the peak jacaranda bloom.

At any one time, there were typically around 4 pedestrians observed standing on road to take photographs with the jacaranda trees throughout the day. At busier times of the day, up to 30 pedestrians were observed standing on the road at any one time.

Most pedestrians were observed to move away as cars were approaching. It is estimated from observations that the average time for pedestrians to clear the road was around 25 seconds.

However, in the worst case, larger groups and those with tripod setups were observed to remain for longer periods with some not moving until prompted by car horns. In the worst case, the delay to motorists was estimated in the order of 60 seconds.

From the observations, there were no serious conflicts or safety issues identified. While the majority of pedestrians and motorists were considerate of each other, some motorists used car horns to move pedestrians on, which has been the cause of frustrations for local residents.



Figure 2 typical observations from CCTV footage during jacaranda blooming (November 2018)

Parking

A parking occupancy survey was undertaken in September 2018 and revealed an average occupancy of 74% in McDougall Street. There is a mix of 1-hour, 2-hour and 4-hour parking restrictions in McDougall Street which have been implemented over the years in response to community feedback. The 4-hour parking was installed to enable some parking for Ensemble Theatre patrons whilst discouraging commuter parking.

Observations from the CCTV footage during the jacaranda season revealed an average parking occupancy of 90% in McDougall Street, which is within the upper limit of Council’s target range for parking management.

Measures implemented during the previous Jacaranda Season are recommended to be again undertaken in the 2022 in an effort to manage visitors to McDougall Street. Marketing the event through associated additional activities that may significantly increase visitor numbers is not considered appropriate due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Therefore, Council is preparing to again implement the following minimal actions for the six-week period:

- Installation of Council-owned Variable Message Sign (x2) to provide safety messaging
- Temporary directional footpath signage
- Hire of additional Porta loos as required
- Extra cleaning of Porta loos and Milson Park toilets

The cost of implementation over the six week period is approximately \$6,000



Photo 1. McDougall Street during Jacaranda Season 2018.



Photo 2. Temporary footpath signage used in 2019.



Photo 3. VMS Signs installed in McDougall Street during the 2019 Season



Photo 4. VMS Signs installed in McDougall Street during the 2019 Season