

**Report to General Manager**

Attachments:

1. Traffic Management Plans A &amp; B

**SUBJECT:** Jacaranda Season – McDougall Street, Kirribilli – Response to Mayoral Minute**AUTHOR:** Michaela Kemp, Manager Traffic & Transport Operations and Sandra Moore, Manager Communications & Events**ENDORSED BY:** Duncan Mitchell, Director Engineering and Property Services**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 meeting on 25 November 2019 (MM01, Minute No. 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*

This report has been prepared 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.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The financial implications are outlined in Table 2 within the report.

The activities and options are not currently funded in Council's Operating budget. Should Council resolve to proceed with any of the options the budget would need to be reallocated from other planned projects which may then not be able to proceed.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. 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.
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## **LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

- Direction:
1. Our Living Environment
  2. Our Built Infrastructure
  4. Our Social Vitality
- Outcome:
- 1.4 Public open space and recreation facilities and services meet community needs
  - 2.2 Vibrant centres, public domain, villages and streetscapes
  - 2.4 Improved traffic and parking management
  - 4.2 North Sydney is creative and home to popular events

## **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.

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- 3. THAT an estimate of costs for each option be provided*

This report has been prepared in response to the resolutions of Council to outline measures that Council has implemented in previous seasons and the feasibility of additional measures for the 2020 jacaranda season and onwards for Council's consideration.

## **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS**

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

## **SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

The sustainability implications are of a minor nature and did not warrant a detailed assessment.

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## 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.



Figure 1 - Flowering Jacarandas McDougall Street in Kirribilli – October – November (Source: Daily Telegraph & Twitter)

Over recent years, Council has received numerous complaints and requests from members of the community concerning the increasing number of visitors to McDougall Street during the jacaranda blooming season. The subject of the complaints and requests are 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.

In addition to the above, the Mayoral Minute of 25 November 2019 (MM01, Minute 325) noted that some residents had expressed concern about people entering their properties to put rubbish in their bins or climb on their property to get the best angle for a photo.

## 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 85<sup>th</sup> percentile vehicle speeds decreased slightly with increasing traffic volumes, ranging from 31.8km/h during peak traffic to 41km/h with lower traffic volumes.

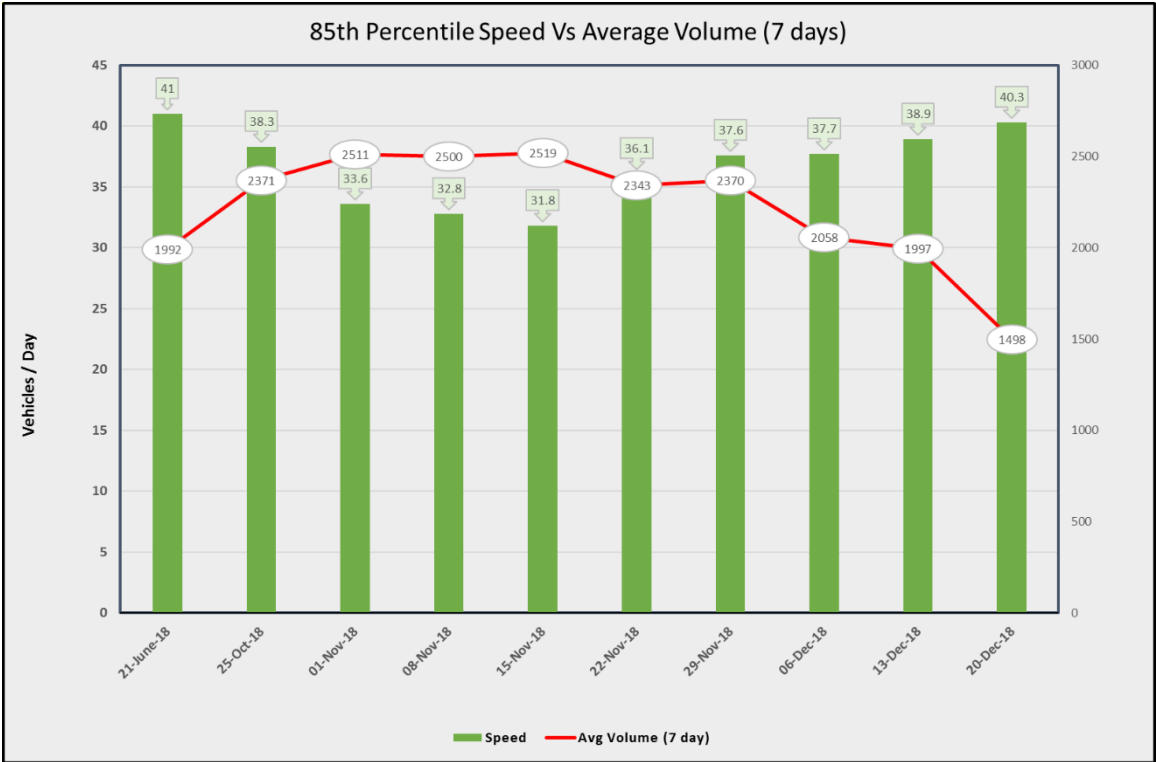


Figure 2 Traffic volume and speed data 2018

### 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 3 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 2019 Jacaranda Season**

In an effort to address some of the concerns raised by the community in previous seasons, the following measures were implemented during the 2019 jacaranda season. There was no specific funding allocated to these measures which, while relatively minor in cost, were funded from existing 2019/20 operational budgets. It is highly likely that Council will be expected to implement these measures as a minimum during the annual jacaranda season for the foreseeable future. The costs of the implemented measures are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Costs of measures implemented in 2019 jacaranda season

| Measure  | 2019/20 Approx. Cost (incl. staff costs) over 6 weeks |
|--|---|
| Council-owned Variable Message Sign (x2)             | \$500   |
| Temporary directional footpath                       | \$1,000   |
| Hire of 3 x Porta loos                               | \$3,000   |
| Extra cleaning of Porta loos and Milson Park toilets | \$1,100   |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$5,600</b>  |



Figure 4 McDougall Street Council-owned VMS sign installed November 2019

### **Additional Measures for Consideration from 2020 Onwards**

Officers from Council’s Traffic & Transport Operations; Communications & Events; and Parks & Reserves departments considered various options to address or resolve some of these impacts going forward. The measures and options considered are outlined in Table 2 of this Report.

Table 2 Summary of additional measures for consideration

| Measure                      | Options   | Considerations   | Level of Impact to community | Level of Council Involvement | Consultation (C)/ Notification (N) Required? | Indicative Costs  |
|------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>1. Traffic Management</b> | a. Temporary full road closure 6 weeks (daylight hours)<br><br><i>Refer to Plan A attached</i>              | Divert all traffic around and remove parking. Requires min. 2 traffic controllers at all times to maintain access for residents<br><br><i>Plan A attached demonstrates how this temporary road closure and traffic diversion will work.</i>  | High                         | High                         | C & N  | \$45,000<br>(7 days x 6 weeks)  |
|                              | b. Stop/Slow Control (daylight hours)   | Daily charge for minimum of 2 traffic controllers<br>Pedestrians may be difficult to control, and some may ignore directions from traffic controllers  | Medium                       | High                         | N  | \$45,000<br>(7 days x 6 weeks)<br><br>\$30,000<br>Peak only<br>(7 days x 4 weeks) |
|                              | c. Half road closure with one-way traffic flow 6 weeks (day & night)<br><br><i>Refer to Plan B attached</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park side – photos</li> <li>• Residential side – travel lane &amp; property access</li> <li>• One-way towards Broughton Street</li> <li>• Closure from Hipwood Street to before boat ramp</li> <li>• Boat ramp access needs to be maintained</li> <li>• Divert via Willoughby Street</li> <li>• Reduced on-street parking for theatre patrons/ residents</li> <li>• Will require parking removal on both sides within designated road closure area.</li> </ul><br><i>Plan B attached demonstrates how this road closure and traffic flow will work.</i> | Medium                       | High                         | C & N  | \$10,000  |



| Measure                                | Options  | Considerations   | Level of Impact to community | Level of Council Involvement | Consultation (C)/ Notification (N) Required? | Indicative Costs                         |
|--|--|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>2. Multi-lingual communications</b> | VMS sign<br>Website<br>Social media  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would need to hire VMS with multi-lingual capability</li> </ul>   | Low                          | Low                          | N  | \$2500                                   |
| <b>3. Full day festival</b>            | Within Milson park and temporary full road closure   | Would potentially need to outsource due to demands on current resources at this time of year<br>Won't address concerns on non-festival days<br>Market stalls/entertainment would be needed | High                         | Very High                    | N  | \$70,000                                 |
| <b>4. Amenity Management</b>           | a. Install three (3) Port-a-loos in Milson Park for two weeks.   | Based on the use of Port-a-loos in 2019, it is recommended that three (3) is adequate to meet demand.  | Medium                       | High                         | N  | \$5,600<br>(3 Port-a-loos for two weeks) |
|  | b. Install six (6) additional, temporary Garbage Bins for rubbish and recyclables around McDougall Street and Milson Park for two weeks. | This includes servicing of the garbage bins 12 times per day over the two-week period.   | Medium                       | High                         | N  | \$1,680<br>(for two weeks)               |

