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# Memorandum/instruction

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SMH 5th Jan 72

## We need the Quay plaza

THE CITY COUNCIL is to be applauded for its acceptance and championing of the imaginative State Planning Authority proposals for a pedestrian plaza at Circular Quay with the Customs House as its centre. Its decision should have the whole-hearted support of every citizen who believes that cities are for people, not for traffic. Unfortunately the scheme is being opposed by those responsible for transport and traffic flow, notably by the Department of Government Transport—by the same forces, in fact, who declared with singular inaccuracy that the plaza at Martin Place would produce intolerable traffic congestion and inconvenience. If this deadlock between authorities continues the State Government should not hesitate to intervene on the side of the council and allow it to implement the proposal.

It is true that the arguments against the closing of Alfred Street to traffic have some force. Some ferry travellers will have further to walk from the bus terminals to their wharves. No doubt there will be greater congestion in Bridge

Street. But their force fades when the advantages of the scheme are considered.

These should not require emphasis, especially after the undeniable popular success of the plaza at Martin Place which now makes a positive contribution not only to the leisure of office workers in the area but also to the warm humanity of the City as a whole. The new attractiveness of Martin Plaza, enclosed as it is on three sides by towering mortar, will not begin to compare with the sunny spaciousness of a Quay plaza. With history at its back in the form of the Customs House and the green heart of Macquarie Place; with a heart-lifting prospect of the Harbour and its life; and with its conferred sense of far horizons, the tang of the sea and the pulse of a great port, it can be a blessing to the thousands who work nearby and a sight to remember for visitors seeking out the character of Sydney. That character, it cannot be too often emphasised, will be determined by the access its people have to its natural advantages. Circular Quay has been not a place but a thoroughfare for too long. The move to restore it to people is overdue.