

File Martin Place Action Plan
Attention Brian Griffin ⁽¹⁹⁾ *BB.*

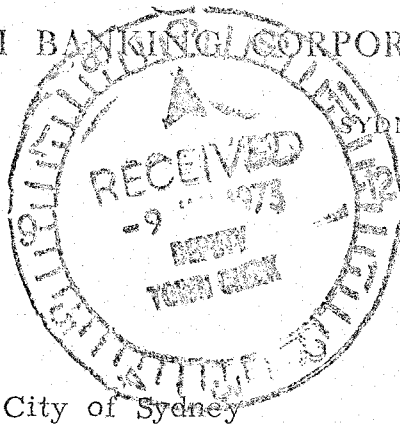
COMMONWEALTH BANKING CORPORATION
SYDNEY, N.S.W.



5 July 1973

MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Town Clerk
The Council of the City of Sydney
Box 1591 GPO
SYDNEY NSW 2001.



Dear Sir

I refer to your letters (both with reference 682/72 DTCC:BM) of 19 June.

One of the letters was addressed to me as Managing Director of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation and the other, as Managing Director of the Commonwealth Savings Bank of Australia. As indicated hereunder, and as you know, we have two buildings fronting Martin Place - correspondence relating to either building may be addressed to me as Managing Director of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation, as the Corporation Board is responsible for all the operations of the Commonwealth Banks, including the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Your letters under reply request the Bank to withdraw the objection lodged with the Minister for Lands concerning the proposed closure of Martin Place. While the two letters are differently phrased, one contains "Council's assurance that the provision in the design for a through route to give direct vehicular access from the proposed plaza to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices and the provision of three parking spaces in the plaza for Commonwealth Cars, will be maintained permanently by the City Council."

I proceed on the assumption that this assurance is applicable to the Corporation building.

*Agree & Confirm
in writing*

Copy to the Press.

B. Griffin for drafts reply 16/11/73

Before I take the matter back to my Board however, it seems to me important to bring out the point that there is much more involved so far as we are concerned than three parking spaces for Commonwealth cars and in the circumstances it would probably be useful for me to set out, for the information of Council, extracts from the letter addressed to the Department of Lands on 21 December 1972. The extracts follow :

" Closure would have a very serious affect on vehicular access to the Head Office building of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation, on the corner of Martin Place, Pitt & Rowe Streets. It would also have an adverse effect on access to the Commonwealth Savings Bank building, on the corner of Martin Place, Castlereagh and Elizabeth Streets, in respect of which a separate objection is being lodged.

The reasons for the Corporation lodging the objection are amplified below.

① The Corporation's Head Office building has entrances from Martin Place, Pitt Street and Rowe Street. At present, vehicular access is available to each of these entrances but, of course, the value varies according to parking restrictions and other limitations. Indeed, the principal Martin Place entrance is by far the most important.

With the heavy traffic flow along Pitt Street (especially since the creation of Martin Plaza) and the limited parking facilities, Pitt Street does not provide a satisfactory access for delivery of goods to this building. In addition, there are no stairs at the Pitt Street entrance and the lifts at this point do not descend below ground level to the basement and sub-basement service areas.

The building is therefore serviced by way of Martin Place and Rowe Street entrances. Lifts at the Martin Place entrance provide access to all floors including the basement and sub-basement. At the Rowe Street entrance a goods lift serves all floors and a vehicular lift provides access to the service areas in the basement and sub-basement. Because of the large number of daily deliveries to the building, and for other reasons mentioned below, the Rowe Street access alone could not adequately meet the Corporation's needs.

Deliveries and collections from the building are numerous and include -

Solution: half in Rowe St
half in Martin Place

Representations to City of Sydney
Parking Advisory Ctee to provide
loading zones. Council has written to COSPARC
19.6.73

①
Deliveries
to the
Corporation
Bldg

3.

- movement of cash and other negotiable items by armoured van or other vehicles;
- twice daily van deliveries of computer input data and print-out material by some 20 vans to approximately 300 branches (most of the vans arrive between 5.30 a m and 7 a m and again between 5.00 p m and 6 p m);
- stationery, office requisites and cheque books;
- furniture and office machinery;
- machine service calls;
- building maintenance calls; and
- supplies of foodstuffs.

② As well as being important in terms of operational effectiveness, the Martin Place entrance is also essential for security reasons. Because of the risks involved in having vehicles immobilised in Rowe Street for extended periods, extensive use is made of the Martin Place entrance, by customers and the Bank alike, for movement of substantial amounts of cash and negotiable items. If Mayne Nickless cash escort vans and other cash-carrying vehicles were to be forced by the extension of Martin Plaza to park in Pitt Street or Castlereagh Street (if permitted) the safety of escorting personnel and risk of armed hold-ups would be greatly increased. Similar risks would apply to both personnel and cash transported to and from the Commonwealth Savings Bank building on the corner of Martin Place and Castlereagh Street.

③ In the event of an emergency such as a serious fire, it would be expected that fire engines, ambulances, etc. would need to use the Martin Place entrance of buildings facing Martin Place to facilitate fire control and evacuation procedures. This is particularly so in respect of the Corporation's Head Office building for the following reasons :

- Continued vehicular access in Martin Place and the severe limitations inherent in the Pitt Street entrance played a very important part in the planning and functional layout of a building erected by the Corporation, as recently as six years ago, between Pitt Street and Castlereagh Street, with entrance from Martin Place.
- The building's main fire stairs spill into the Martin Place lobby area.

Answer: "Yes"!

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- (c) The "Minerva" thermal alarm controls are located at the Martin Place entrance.
- (d) There are fire hose booster connections in the immediate vicinity of the Martin Place entrance.
- (e) The width of Martin Place itself would allow greater flexibility in terms of fire control, evacuation and safety measures generally.

Let's spell out exactly how.

It is difficult to imagine how satisfactory vehicular access for fire engines, ambulances, etc. could be provided in an emergency. In this regard it seems important to add that several thousand people work in the two (Commonwealth Bank) buildings facing Martin Place.

From the foregoing it will be evident that continued vehicular access to the Martin Place entrance of the Corporation's Head Office building is of utmost importance in terms of personal safety, security and operational effectiveness. A somewhat similar situation applies in respect of the bank's building on the corner of Martin Place and Castlereagh Street.

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Traffic
Circulation

As regards vehicular traffic in the general area, the importance of Martin Place as an exit for traffic should not be overlooked. Not only does Martin Place serve as the immediate outlet for Pitt Street traffic (Hunter Street to Martin Place) but, perhaps more importantly, it will be the immediate outlet for traffic entering Castlereagh Street from the Australia Hotel/Theatre Royal redevelopment. Similar considerations apply in respect of Elizabeth and Phillip Streets (both sides in each case).

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Federal
Offices

Also we direct attention to the fact that rooms for the Prime Minister, for senior Federal Ministers, for the Leader of the Federal Opposition and for Members of the Federal Parliament, as well as a Cabinet room, were specially included in the Corporation's (new) Martin Place building erected about six years ago. There is no access from the Pitt Street entrance of the building to Cabinet and Ministers' rooms other than by circuitous routes.

The building in question was designed in the (normal) expectation of continued vehicular access to Martin Place. "

*Answer: Write to Gough Whitlam
"We are taking this matter up
directly with the Prime
Minister".*

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Comment

I set out the foregoing extracts, against the possibility, however remote, that Council may not have fully understood what could be involved for us if Martin Place is closed and, on the subject generally, I take the liberty of suggesting that it might be difficult for Council to live up to its assurance that a through route to give direct vehicular access to our principal Martin Place entrance will always be available. Undoubtedly, pressures of one kind or another will be generated if the proposal proceeds.

As noted earlier, it seems appropriate for me, before putting to my Board the request contained in your letters of 19 June, to have your assurance that Council has taken full account of what is said in the extracts quoted above and further, that Council would intend to do all in its power to ensure the continuance of the through route to give direct vehicular access, at all hours and on a permanent basis, to our principal Martin Place entrance. Moreover, while I note the reference to "three parking spaces in the plaza for Commonwealth Cars", it is clear that some arrangement will be necessary for cash delivery, etc.

Not 20
As relevant to the problems that could face us in the future unless special arrangements are made, I add I have heard suggestions that in the longer term Pitt Street too is to be converted to a pedestrian mall or plaza.

It scarcely needs to be said that closure of both Martin Place and Pitt Street would have the greatest significance for us, situated as we are with our principal entrances to both streets.

Yours faithfully

B B Callaghan
B B Callaghan

No

but maybe
OK between
9AM - 5pm
or in
banking P
hours.

(Signature)