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LETTERS to th

Elevate footpaths

I READ with interest the report in the *Daily Telegraph* on Tuesday regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Quay area.

[The report said the City Council on Monday had discussed two plans for the redevelopment of Sydney Cove and decided to aim at a plan incorporating the best features of both.

One plan was the £30 million Council plan and the other a design submitted by the Sydney Cove Area Redevelopment Committee.]

Without complete details of the proposals one is hesitant to express a strong opinion, but it does appear that each plan is along strictly conventional lines and neither seems ready to help solve the major problems of avoiding traffic crossing itself and of pedestrians and vehicular traffic meeting and crossing.

More room, by more open space and wider roadways, will not really help — in fact the wider the roadway the longer it takes pedestrians to clear, and so the greater the delay to motorists.

As redevelopment of the Quay proceeds it will bring more and more people into the area and soon the same old snarl of traffic waiting to clear, and pedestrian and motor traffic waiting to cross, will develop.

At the present time pedestrians are delivered to the Quay by rail at an upper or first-floor level, and it would be no great task to carry up to that level by escalators the pedestrians now arriving by bus, ferry or private car.

Better flow

If, then, pedestrians could proceed along elevated footpaths to their offices, shops, etc., it requires little imagination to realise the immediate improvement in traffic flow, both pedestrian and vehicular.

A little more imagination — and courage — is necessary to envisage the whole of the inner city of Sydney — that bordered on the east by Macquarie Street and Elizabeth Street; on the west by George (or perhaps Clarence) Street; on the north by the Quay, and on the south by Liverpool Street

— with footpaths on the first floor or other elevated level, some of them perhaps moving footways, and a free flow of traffic, unimpeded by any crossing pedestrian traffic.

Yet such a system of footpaths would not, in this day and age, be an insuperable problem, and once constructed, there would result immediately:

(a) The avoidance of most of the 2500 plus accidents in the area which, last year, caused bodily injury to some 1000 people and death to around 20.

This alone should justify the cost involved, without including the loss of time and the damage to property resulting directly from such accidents.

Extra parking

(b) An immediate effective widening by up to 30 per cent of all inner city roads, giving, in most cases, up to three extra lanes of traffic.

This increased width of roadways, together with the additional parking facilities mentioned later, could, for all time, handle adequately whatever saturation of motor traffic takes place.

(c) A saving of 75 per cent or more of motorists' time in driving through the City.

(d) A saving of perhaps 40 per cent or 50 per cent of pedestrians' time in moving from block to block.

(e) Unlimited off-street parking, as many buildings would, for the purposes of their own trade, gradually convert their ground floors and/or basements into open space or parking space — envisage David Jones, Farmers, etc., with their existing ground floors open for parking of customers' cars, delivery of goods, etc.

Many existing buildings could add an additional floor to recover any space so lost, and new buildings would, of course, be designed with open ground floor area.

(f) Buses, taxis and private cars could pick up and set down off the roadway. Delivery of goods and the despatch of goods could be effected without any interruption to traffic.

(g) As existing blocks are redeveloped, the whole of the road level area would be left open, the



buildings being virtually on stilts, with open space for cars, buses, etc.

For example, envisage the retail block bounded by Pitt and Castlereagh Streets, and Park and Market Streets so redeveloped, in this case with perhaps a direct underground link to the Town Hall Station.

Trade in the area would undoubtedly be considerably boosted and it could be a most effective counter to the present drift of retail trade from the city area.

Many other advantages will, of course, come to the mind of readers, but need not be developed here.

Such a picture involves no costly resumption of land, nor, indeed, any loss of building space, as the Building Heights Committee could allow additional cubic content of buildings, to compensate for loss of ground floor facilities, where this part of the building is left as open space.

The total footpath construction—perhaps some 25 miles—is, by modern standards, not an impossible task and, in any case, could be developed in two or more stages.

Unimpeded

If the cross streets, such as Bathurst, Park, Market, etc., were first converted, traffic proceeding north and south along the major streets of Pitt, Castlereagh and George would flow unimpeded by any cross pedestrian traffic, while the cross streets would all have the immediate benefit of the extra width of roadway.

It is suggested consideration be given to the appointment of a small committee, consisting of men with vision who would have power to co-opt specialists such as town planners, university professors, engineers, architects, traffic controllers, etc., as occasion demanded.

The cost involved would not be great and would be fully justified by the possible saving in human life and personal injuries, in frustration and capital loss and, too, by the increased efficiency of the city of Sydney.

Within perhaps 10 years Sydney could be the leading example of enlightened traffic handling development in the world.

—N. E. JONES
Highlands Avenue,
Wahroonga.