Introduction:

BRUNSWICK RESIDENTS NETWORK TRAFFIC SURVEY

In February and March 2011, residents living in and near Victoria and Albert Streets, Brunswick conducted a survey of traffic problems in their neighbourhood. This report compiles the responses from more than 200 households, and includes a selection of the hundreds of written comments that people added to the questionnaire.

In recent times, many residents have raised concern about the impact of traffic in Victoria and Albert Streets, which Moreland Council has identified as a major east-west corridor linking new “activity centres” for Melbourne’s growing inner-city population.

However, Moreland Council planners don’t see traffic management in these streets as a priority – in 2010, Council staff wrote to a local resident that “the speed and volume characteristics in Albert Street are considered to be acceptable for a local road in an inner city location”, and therefore “Council cannot justify intervening by installation of traffic management devices in Albert Street ahead of other streets with higher speed, volume and casualty statistics.”

For many local residents these attitudes seem inexplicable, as many believe that traffic volume is increasing and the quality of life in the streets is changing for the worse. The Victoria and Albert Street corridor is undergoing major changes, with new development projects underway as old factories are transformed into new high density (and high rise) housing.

For this reason, the Brunswick Residents Network (BRN) decided to conduct a more detailed survey of local residents, to gauge their opinions and possible solutions.

A one page survey was distributed to houses, flats and businesses along Victoria Street and Albert Street, in the blocks between Nicholson and Lygon Streets, and Lygon Street and Sydney Road. The survey was also distributed to all side streets that link the two streets or feed traffic into the two streets from Glenlyon Road or Blyth Streets.

People were invited to complete the survey online or fill in the form and return it. Members of the BRN also doorknocked some of their neighbours, to assist them to complete the survey – especially residents in the area who are elderly or don’t speak English as their first language.

By the end of March, 212 households had completed the survey – about half online and the remainder on paper – a significant response rate. The results clearly show that Moreland Council has misjudged the level of local concern over the changing impacts of traffic on community amenity and safety.

As detailed below, residents highlighted concerns over traffic volume and speed through residential streets (especially from large vehicles); increasing traffic related to new development projects in the neighbourhood; hazards for bicyclists and pedestrians; damage to parked cars, problems with resident parking and inaction by Council to address these problems. The final section of the report details possible action by Council, especially the urgent need to develop an overarching traffic management plan for the Victoria and Albert Street corridor, in consultation with local residents.
1) WHY VICTORIA AND ALBERT STREETS?

Victoria Street and Albert Street in Brunswick were chosen for this initial traffic survey because they are two crucial streets in Moreland Council’s overall urban planning. In the Brunswick Structure Plan and other council planning documents, Victoria Street and Albert Street are described as a “recognisable core” of the suburb. They are supposed to be a “pedestrian friendly corridor”, running east-west from Merri Creek in the east to the parklands west of the Upfield Railway line (see the map below from the Brunswick Structure Plan, Volume 1, p29). They link major “activity centres” proposed for Nicholson, Lygon and Sydney Roads, in the southern part of Moreland Council’s region.

The Brunswick Structure Plan describes Albert and Victoria Street as the “primary east - west pedestrian link along urban renewal.” A key strategy in the plan is to “develop the Albert and Victoria axis along Albert and Victoria Streets as a high profile sustainable inner city urban renewal area” (Strategy 1.3). The plan sets out a number of “desired outcomes”, including:

- Improved street and open space networks that allow the majority of people to arrive and move around Brunswick on foot, by bike or by using public transport
- That improvements to the bicycle network allow every street to be a cycling street
- That pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities are given priority access around the Brunswick Activity Centre…
- Strengthened east-west pedestrian and cycling connections along Albert and Victoria Streets link Brunswick’s regional open spaces
- That people of all ages and abilities can move safely and easily on footpaths in Brunswick…

Other council documents like the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy stress that walking, cycling and public transport should be encouraged and that these two streets should be a major east-west link to encourage residents to walk between homes, shops and parks.

However, in spite of the vision promoted in their planning documents, Moreland Council has failed to bring this vision into reality. The responses to this survey show that many residents believe that these two streets are hazardous for bicyclists and drivers, unfriendly for pedestrians and that there is an increase in traffic, especially heavy vehicles. The survey also shows that residents believe new high-rise development projects in and near Victoria and Albert Streets will increase traffic flows into residential streets, adding to existing traffic that cuts through the neighbourhood to avoid delays on nearby arterial roads. Moreland Council should prioritise traffic management in this area, if they want their Structure Plan to be implemented.
2) SURVEY RESULTS

1) I believe that the amount of traffic in my street, compared to a year or two ago, is:

- Less: 0.5%
- About the same: 11.1%
- More: 88.4%

2) Please tell us about your household's usual methods of transport.

- Number of cars: 1.25
- Number of bicycles: 1.58
- Number of people who drive regularly: 1.28
- Number of people who bike regularly: 1.29
- Number of people who walk regularly: 1.94
- Number of people who use public transport regularly: 1.42
From the 212 households who responded to the survey, the vast majority believe that traffic has increased compared to a year or two ago. 88.4 per cent of those surveyed believe that traffic has increased, 11.1 per cent feel it is about the same and less than 1 per cent say there is less traffic.

The second question asked people about their usual method of transport, including cars, bikes, walking and public transport. Many households ticked a number of modes (e.g. parents driving and children using bikes; people alternating between car, walking and public transport etc), but the averages of all 212 respondents are displayed in figure 2 (above).

An important outcome of this question is the number of pedestrians and cyclists in the neighbourhood, with people riding their bikes as regularly as they drive cars. This highlights the value of Moreland Council’s stated commitment to walking, cycling and public transport – but should be judged in relation to the later comments about the hazards for cyclists and pedestrians.

3) CONCERNS ABOUT TRAFFIC
The next questions asked people to list their concerns about traffic in their street and nearby streets, and to choose their top three concerns (People could chose from a list of concerns, add their own or state that they had no concerns).

In both the overall list of concerns, and the ranking of concerns, there were three major issues. Over 75 per cent of those surveyed (more than 160 households) identified these issues in their list of concerns:

- Traffic cutting through these residential streets from nearby arterial roads (“rat-running”)
- The speed at which cars and other vehicles travel in these streets
- More traffic from new developments, as old factories are transformed into high rise apartment buildings.

Other key concerns (and the percentage of people who listed them) include:

- Safety of bike riders (63.2 per cent)
- Trucks and large vehicles using my street (61.7 per cent)
- Aggressive driving or road rage (56.9 per cent)

As detailed in figure 3) above, there were a number of other concerns. About half those surveyed agreed that other issues were a problem, including rubbish and glass on the footpath, safety of pedestrians, noise from traffic and damage caused by vehicles to parked cars.

Only 1 per cent of people responded that “I have no concerns”. As well as listing their key concerns, people responding to the survey were invited to add comments to each question. There were hundreds of comments on various topics, and a selection is set out in the following sections.
3a) **TRAFFIC CUTTING THROUGH RESIDENTIAL STREETS**

(“RAT-RUNNING”)

One of the top three issues identified in the survey was the problem of “rat-running” – people using local residential streets as thoroughfares to avoid the congestion of major arterial roads like Sydney Road, Lygon Street and Nicholson Street. Instead of using the major east-west corridors along Glenlyon Road and Blyth Street, many people use Albert and Victoria Streets to cut through the suburb – as detailed below, this often involves speed and aggressive driving.

78.6 per cent of people identified rat-running as a concern, and the use of Albert Street and Victoria Street for this short-cut traffic, especially heavy vehicles and trucks, creates hazards for cyclists and pedestrians (detailed below). It also places pressure on smaller streets, such as Minnie Street and Nash Street, as people leave the main arterial roads to cut through to Victoria and Albert.

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**Comments on rat running**

“Traffic is increased and the street can't cope. It seems that Albert Street is being used as a major thoroughfare for non-local traffic. This is frustrating, dangerous and expensive for all the repairs to my car.”

“Moreland Council says that Glenlyon and Blyth Streets should be the main east-west traffic routes, but seems to be doing nothing to stop rat-running through residential streets. It is worrying that Council spends so much time developing strategies for walking, bike riding and public transport, then does nothing practical to address traffic management in our streets to implement these strategies.”

“The traffic in Lygon St and Nicholson streets is incredibly busy. I live on Victoria St and it seems to be a main thoroughfare which is getting busier every week - especially when trying to cross over Lygon St, with the parked cars etc there are so many obstacles that make it dangerous. Soon it will be as bad as Albert St which often has 'stand offs' between cars - where they play 'chicken' and refuse to budge. It’s ridiculous!”

“People cutting through from Lygon to Glenlyon Streets, at speed! Meanwhile - you say its OK to reduce the parking in the apartment blocks -where are these cars parking?! On the streets and making the problem worse!!”

“There are a large number of Trucks and Utes speeding through between Sydney Road and Lygon Street rather than using the larger roads like Blyth or Glenlyon. At peak hours there are a huge amount of extra cars using Victoria as a short cut. A high volume of these cars of them speed and the speed humps especially Victoria Street are inadequate. There's always tension too. People seem to use their horns a lot and get frustrated at the pace of traffic. We have had many near misses and feel that there is a high risk for accidents here especially with the number of children on our street.”

“Minnie St has so much through traffic that is clearly no local residents. They also drive so fast it’s awful.”

“I live off Victoria in a dead end street - the amount of traffic trying to use my street as a thoroughfare is problematic. Especially when there are signs that say no through road clearly posted.”

“Rat-runners use Nash Street to access Victoria and beyond. They often do this to avoid the lights at Blyth Street, as the light sequence is too short (allowing at most two cars through each side.”

“Fast moving non-local traffic using our street as a major thoroughfare between Sydney and Lygon Streets has increased. So have builders’ heavy vehicles and utes using the street as early as 5am every day of the week including Sundays.”
3b) TRAFFIC FROM NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

In response to the question on their top three concerns, 75.6 per cent listed more traffic from new development projects as one of their concerns, with 47.7 per cent including it as one of their top three issues (see figure 4).

There were dozens of comments on the impact of new construction projects, such as the multi-storey Elvera complex in Lygon Street and proposed buildings on the Tontine, Sires and Albert Street sites – both with the short-term impacts of construction vehicles, and the long-term impact of transforming old factories into new housing.

This report cannot address the full range of issues related to re-development (such as impacts on open space, the role of social housing and housing mix in the neighbourhood, environmental sustainability of construction etc). But it’s clear to all residents that traffic is affected by increasing construction along the Albert Street / Victoria Street corridor, as old factories are re-developed. There are many projects in the pipeline in this small area:

- the 11-storey Elvera apartments already built in Lygon Street between Albert and Victoria;
- the proposed 9-story building at the old Bruno’s site on the corner of Victoria and Lygon Streets (next to Elvera);
- the proposed 11-storey building at 304-310 Lygon Street, Brunswick East (next to the existing maternal and child health centre
- the 8-storey building proposed at 240 Lygon Street (south of Albert Street)
- the apartment / town house complex currently under construction at 201-207 Albert Street
- the proposed 14-story shopping and residential complex at 284-294 Albert Street (between Sydney Road and the Upfield Railway Line);
- the major re-development of the Tontine site between Nicholson Street, John Street and Albert Street.
- the proposal for a seven-story re-development of the Sires factory opposite Fleming Park in Albert Street (under review after an initial permit rejection by Council);
- proposals for a “landmark” building near Brunswick Station, between Albert and Victoria;
- the likelihood that other factories in Albert and Victoria Streets - the giant Fitwear Hosiery factory and buildings at 92-94 Albert Street - will be demolished and rebuilt as high density housing.

It’s not hard to see that all these projects will affect the vision of Albert and Victoria Streets as a “pedestrian friendly corridor”.

But where’s the initiative from Council, to conduct long-term analysis of how traffic from all these different projects will combine to affect local safety and amenity? When consultants prepare traffic plans for each of these projects, they seem to just look at traffic impacts at the nearest intersection, rather than analyse how traffic and parking issues will accumulate when all these projects come together.
Comments on impacts from new development projects

“Looking to the near future, with thousands of new residents in a small area of less than a square kilometre, the ‘Increase in traffic caused by new developments’ would have to be my greatest concern.”

“Since the new high-rise residential development (opposite Randazzo Park) there has already been a significant amount more traffic - and that is only the people that are working on the building.”

“I am all for new developments (although the 10 story Elvira building is stupidly high!) but stop allowing them to reduce their car parking and loading bays.... it is creating real problems. Also - but please, please, please make our streets permit parking only to stop all of the people from parking there and tramming to work.”

“I live on Frith Street and the traffic is atrocious during the day. The impact of cheap, generic apartments being thrown up on every hotspot corner in Brunswick is tainting the suburb and having serious effect on traffic congestion. I can confidently say i won’t be living in Brunswick because of this in the next 5 years.”

“Traffic has substantially increased with the development of more apartments in the street. More and more cars are using the street to cut through to avoid traffic light intersections, as the main roads are very congested.”

“The traffic congestion is only going to increase and worsen with all the new developments. Implementing permit parking now will encourage visitors to use public transport.”

“Truck traffic increased last year ... presumably because of the construction of the 10 storey building in Lygon Street, near Victoria ... since its completion, truck traffic is back to "normal" now (normal for Victoria Street)...”

“More apartments have been built and they don't have off street parking to accommodate all the cars so they move to the road making it very congested on both sides of the street”

3c) PROBLEMS IN NARROW STREETS

To the west of Sydney Road, Victoria and Albert Streets are quite wide, with bike lanes and freely moving traffic. But in the survey area, in the blocks between Sydney Road, Lygon Street and Nicholson Street, both roads narrow and there are no bike paths (even though the Brunswick Structure Plan says these are pedestrian and bike corridors).

With cars parked down both sides, Albert Street between Sydney and Lygon is effectively a one lane street – with cars and trucks weaving between the gaps, and regular road rage incidents when drivers refuse to back up or give way (as illustrated by the photo from Albert Street on the front cover of this report).

In a 2010 letter to a local resident, Council staff stated that “the speed and volume characteristics in Albert Street are considered to be acceptable for a local road in an inner city location.” This attitude is clearly at odds with the overwhelming sentiment expressed in this survey, and suggests that Council staff and Councillors have not been effectively consulting with the ratepayers who pay their wages.
Comments on narrow streets

“There has been an increase in both cars and trucks in Victoria Street and this causes issues as there is usually no room to yield to let traffic through due to parked cars on both sides of the road. There is also limited parking available to residents.”

“There is effectively only one lane on Albert St for two way traffic, between Lygon and Sydney Roads. I have been in numerous situations where there was a complete blockage of traffic flow, with vehicles travelling in two directions in a head-on situation, and one group of cars had to reverse to allow traffic flow. This is happening on an increasing basis. I am a medical doctor, and see this as a clear and urgent risk to emergency services access to the area which needs to be addressed. I have contacted the council about this and received an inadequate reply. I think the Ombudsman should be contacted regarding the issue of emergency services access to the area, though I have not had the time to follow this up (where to write to etc).”

“Traffic on this street is absolutely outrageous. Cars get stuck when there are residents parked on either side of the road and as a result there is a lot of road rage and also parked car damage. The other problem is when cars have ‘free run’ down the street, cars exceed the speed limit. The speed humps do not seem to deter people.”

“There seems to be a slight increase in speed particularly down Albert St. Also due to a higher number of cars parking in the street particularly over the weekend there seems to be more instances of cars creating mini traffic jams, with people reluctant to let others past”

“People don’t seem to know how to give way down narrow streets anymore. More cars are parked on the streets which doesn’t help but increased traffic flow down these streets is making it chaotic on both Albert and Victoria street. People are getting frustrated, I hear more people yelling and beeping their horn in the last 6 months than I have in 3 years prior. The constant badly carried out road works on both streets isn’t helping either.”

“I have lived in Trafford Street off Albert for nearly 30 years. It can be a major operation to drive from Lygon St to Sydney Rd and vice versa due to insufficient space caused by many parked cars.”

“There is a bad bottleneck of traffic near the corner of albert / sydney rd on the ANZ side as cars can park on albert street and this will get worse once the new apartments are completed further down albert street towards lygon and the traffic that comes with those occupants”

“Most of the narrow streets are not wide enough to allow two way traffic. What idiot considered it a good idea to increase the traffic to these minor roads?”

3d) SPEED

In spite of the narrowness of these residential streets and the presence of a few speed humps, 78 per cent of those surveyed identified speed as a major concern, with nearly 59 per cent highlighting “aggressive driving and road rage” as a concern.

Comments on speeding

“For such a narrow, crowded street people drive extremely fast along Albert St between Lygon and Sydney Roads - The speed and aggression of drivers has increased.”

“Too many trucks, cars speeding down the road. At peak times it is difficult to cross the road with my baby, and few slow down when they see the pram. Lots of residents doing u-turns using side streets, which is dangerous considering the speed of the traffic going through.”
“My main concerns are the number of people who jump the red lights at the corner of Victoria and Lygon. It happens a lot. And, the amount of ‘hoons’ who drive far too fast down Victoria St. There are a lot of kids and cyclists in this area and that driving makes it less safe for them.”

“We have speed humps in our street but the speeds people travel down there are crazy, we have had animals ran over several times in front of our house, the traffic seems to be getting so heavy its not normal for side streets.”

3e) LARGE VEHICLES USING RESIDENTIAL STREETS

Beyond general concerns about traffic volume and speed, many people responding to the survey raised particular opposition to the number of large vehicles, including trucks, delivery vans, construction workers’ vehicles and four wheel drives (4WD).

There are obviously peak periods where heavy vehicles are present, such as the construction of Elvera or the townhouse complex at 201 Albert Street, or the presence of trucks for the NBN roll-out (which coincided with the survey period). However the number of major development projects will not diminish in future years, and of the 212 households that responded, 150 (71.8 per cent) identified “No entry for large vehicles (except delivery)” as the most popular option for action by Council (see below).

Comments on large vehicles in residential streets

“Delivery trucks and those doing the rat run through back streets has increased significantly. Too many trucks and four wheel drives”

“There has been a major increase in heavy vehicles using both Victoria and Albert streets, further increasing traffic congestion. Blyth Street or Glenlyon Road are more appropriate routes for heavy vehicles to access businesses.”

“More trucks, heavier traffic flow in general.”

“Too many trucks hitting nearby speed hump hard. Too much through traffic. Why don't they use Blythe or Glenlyon? Occasional idiot speeding and tooting on the way over each speed hump.”

“Many more vehicles particularly commercial services and light trucks”

“More cars and large trucks taking short cuts, and more shopping buses”

“It is not only increase in traffic amount itself but also more large vehicles use the street. Increased number of cars/trucks from tradespeople / NBN / Telstra”

“Many construction vehicles, many delivery vehicles illegally mounting curb, more cars.”

The changing population of Brunswick also needs some attention from Council traffic managers: there are increasing numbers of young families in the neighbourhood who drive SUVs and 4WD, yet many younger cyclists identified these vehicles as a major traffic hazard. The combination of trucks, 4WD and bicycles in narrow streets like Albert and Victoria is a recipe for disaster, but Council has taken no initiatives to address the problem.
“There seem to be more SUVs and I hate them. They take up too much road space in smaller streets. Make Brunswick SUV-free!”

“Many more 4WDs, people are using the rat-run down Nash and George Streets.”

“Despite the speed humps in Victoria St between Lygon St & Sydney Rd many vehicles, especially, 4-wheel drives, take it far too fast”

“Heavier vehicles especially 4WDs, have increased. I refer to traffic in Victoria and Albert streets: my own street is a cul de sac and has no through traffic.”

“Did I say that I hate SUVs?”

### 3f) DAMAGE TO PARKED CARS

The narrowness of Albert and Victoria Street, the slaloming of trucks between parked vehicles, and the speed of non-locals rat running through the streets has caused a lot of damage to parked cars. Council officers rely on police reports to determine the number of accidents in the neighbourhood, but it’s clear that many accidents go unreported because residents can’t identify the culprit and this is a major and costly problem.

#### Comments on vehicle damage

“The resident of 195 Victoria street last year had their parked car on Victoria street wiped out at 3am by a truck driver that veered off the road into a street sign, into their car and then into the fence of the neighbouring property. The truck fled the scene and the poor residents had to fit the bill to the damage done.”

“I definitely would not classify Albert Street as a residential street anymore. This is a huge problem. Both my husbands’ car and my car have been damaged whilst parked on the street outside our house SIX times in the last year, with no note left. This has cost us approximately $3,000 in repairs to date.”

“Our neighbours in Albert Street had the front of their car totally destroyed in a hit and run by an electricity company truck that pulled over to let another car pass – then the truck took off without stopping!”

“My parked car has been damaged 3 times in the last year.”

“A resident of our street was given a personal truck parking spot and the road was chewed up by the weight of his truck as he turned the wheels to park.”
### 3g) WALKING AND CYCLING IN BRUNSWICK

#### Brunswick Traffic Victoria & Albert

**Please tell us how you feel about walking in Brunswick**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe walking on the footpaths in the day</td>
<td>44.0% (91)</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe walking on the footpaths at night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe riding a bike on this street</td>
<td>6.5% (12)</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe crossing the roads</td>
<td>11.2% (22)</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need more traffic lights or crossings to safely cross busy roads</td>
<td>24.6% (49)</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian / bike crossing lights do not change fast enough</td>
<td>26.9% (52)</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street lights are bright enough for walking / riding at night</td>
<td>8.4% (17)</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **answered question**: 209
- **skipped question**: 3

#### 5) Please tell us how you feel about walking in Brunswick

![Chart showing the percentage of views on various walking and cycling perceptions in Brunswick.](chart.png)

- **Strongly agree**
- **Agree**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**
In response to a question about how people feel walking in Brunswick, the vast majority (91.8 per cent) feel safe walking during the day time.

However, this figure drops significantly when people were asked about walking at night, with just 60.2 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that it’s safe and nearly 40 per cent feeling unsafe (Because this survey gained responses from households, not individuals, we cannot break down these figures by gender or age, but comments added to the questionnaire suggest that it is women and the elderly who feel less safe at night.).

Concern about safety is even sharper for bike riders: only 39.7 per cent of respondents feel safe riding a bike on these streets, with 60.3 per cent saying they feel unsafe (this includes 21.2 per cent strongly agreeing that it is unsafe).

Nearly 40 per cent of people feel that it is unsafe to cross the road, with 59.3 per cent calling for more traffic lights or crossings on major streets (including plantations for bikes on Glenlyon Road).

Mobility and poor footpaths are a concern for people with disabilities (such as those using the Salvation Army Centre in Albert Street) or the elderly who use the Greek club in Albert Street. Some elderly residents also highlighted young cyclists and late night pedestrians as a problem: “Selfish bike riders who ignore traffic rules, endangering pedestrians”; “Passengers alighting from trams”; “Pedestrians drinking on streets leaving empties”; “It's impossible to get a decent night's sleep from the noise from pedestrians. The footpath is hard to walk on especially in Albert near Lygon.”

Given that Albert and Victoria Streets are supposed to be pedestrian and bike friendly corridors, these figures highlight the failure of Moreland Council to translate their planning documents into reality.

**Comments on the hazards of bike riding and walking**

“I am a bike rider, and I find it difficult to ride safely down my own street (Albert Street) due to the narrowness of Albert Street, and the amount of vehicles including heavy trucks.”

“I don't feel safe riding my bike on our stretch of Victoria St, which is a shame because I can connect to great bike paths from here. Cars travelling along cross streets routinely turn right onto Sydney Rd without giving way to pedestrians crossing Sydney Rd. I notice this in particular on Victoria and Glenlyon/Dawson St. It's alarming, especially as I'm usually wheeling a pram or carrying a baby.”

“Streets becoming less pleasant places to meet, walk or bike - thus destructive of neighbourliness. Minor streets, once quiet and friendly, are now traffic sewers. Chaotic traffic, with blockages made worse with aggressive driving responses”

“We live across the road from Fleming Park - the speed and amount of traffic is a constant threat to people who cross Albert St to use the park, but particularly small children using the playground in Fleming Park”

“Have witnessed several near miss car accidents and near miss fatalities of cyclists, pedestrians and their dogs at the Lygon / Victoria intersection.”

“High speed traffic is dangerous for cyclists - car drivers tailgating and abusing cyclists, particularly in Albert street where there is no room to pass safely.”

“The condition of our footpaths are terrible, they need to be totally fixed not just patched.”
3h) LIMITED PARKING FOR RESIDENTS

Moreland Council is currently developing a new parking management strategy, to address the long-running inner-city debate over car parking. Under Council’s parking policy, “Permits allow residents greater opportunity to park near their property but do not guarantee a parking space nearby.”

There were differing views about how to deal with parking amongst residents who responded to the survey, reflecting the variety of households in the neighbourhood and the number of cars in each house or block of flats. However many people identified problems with increased numbers of cars spilling out of new high-rise developments onto residential streets, saying they will impact on an already difficult situation.

One solution to parking problems is to encourage people to move to public transport, walking and cycling. But Council’s failure to prioritise traffic management in these residential streets means that many people are reluctant to ride on streets where there are fast-moving vehicles, trucks and no bike lanes.

**Comments on parking**

“Even though our street is a permit zone, sometimes we cannot park any-where near our property. New developments on our street have meant more cars are provided with permits, but the roads are not equipped with more spaces to accommodate these new permit holders.”

“The traffic has reached to levels of frustration. You can not even park your car near your home due to inpatient drivers behind you. Most times I usually drive around the block a few times until the traffic has eased off so I can park with care.”

“Parking is another concern. There is clearly not enough parking in the new high density developments, or perhaps they charge for their parking spaces and residents choose to park on the street, which means those of us without off-street parking, cannot park outside our own homes.”

“Parking for residents is almost impossible during business hours.”

“Albert Street near Lygon Street has seen a significant increase in traffic congestion over the last year. This is due to the increasing popularity of the area, for bars, restaurants and the East Brunswick Pub being a live music venue. The current parking restrictions of ‘No parking’ between 8.00am and 6.00 pm on one side of Albert Street and the ‘1hr’ limited parking restriction on the other side of Albert street make it near impossible for residents to find parking. Implementing Permit Parking is desperately needed. This would enable residents to park and reduce traffic congestion as it would encourage the use of public transport to visitors of the area.”

“Major parking issues and noise late at night due to patrons of East Brunswick Club parking in local streets.”

“Significant increase in traffic associated with East Brunswick Club and much more noise around midnight when patrons leaving and major inconvenience regarding parking for residents.”

“It is really busy, fortunately people are still polite but I can tell frustration levels are rising - especially on Saturday.”

“Unable to park near my house after 8am weekdays or Saturday between 9 and 4pm.”
3i) NO CONCERNS

Presumably, many people who received a survey but did not complete it were less concerned about traffic than the views detailed above. However with 212 households replying, Moreland Council should take little comfort from this fact. The overwhelming response from people who responded to the survey was the belief that traffic management was an increasing problem. Only 1 per cent of people responded that “I have no concerns”, adding just a few comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I don't have a problem with it. People move off the road to allow others to pass. The only thing I would say is it would be nice if more people waved as a thank you when you get off the road for them!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Having lived at 157 [Victoria Street] for 25+ years, I can tell you that the amount of traffic is no more than it ever has been…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have no traffic concerns. There are occasionally broken bits of glass from bottles on the road, but that's all.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Brunswick has become popular so our population has increased. You can't avoid an increase on traffic and by restricting it things just get worse.”</td>
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3j) COUNCIL INACTION

As we gathered responses to surveys, door-knocking neighbours and speaking to people along Albert and Victoria Street and neighbouring roads, a common theme was the lack of action by Moreland Council to address resident concerns.

Elected Councillors and Council staff feel that they are working hard in the best interest of ratepayers, but there is a level of hostility to Council, with many residents suggesting they are ignoring resident concerns. As one resident stated: “Why isn’t Council doing this survey? Why are we paying the ******** so much rates when they just sit on their arse?”

Comments on council inaction

“Moreland Council says that Glenlyon and Blyth Streets should be the main east-west traffic routes, but seems to be doing nothing to stop rat-running through residential streets. It is worrying that Council spends so much time developing strategies for walking, bike riding and public transport, then does nothing practical to address traffic management in our streets to implement these strategies.”

“I was involved in trying to address traffic management in Albert Street in the early 80s. Council advised against traffic lights at Lygon and Sydney Rd as ‘lights attract traffic’ - their comment. Yet years later when Safeway comes, up went traffic lights.”

“Again, none of these are new ... and there have been multiple community meetings with local community and Council ...”

“Moreland Council seem to be out of their depth on this issue. Our elected reps are invisible and Council administration treats residents with contempt.”
4) FIXING THE PROBLEMS

After identifying their concerns, residents were asked what sort of methods that would support to improve traffic management on their street.

The results detailed in figure 6) aggregate responses from a number of different locations: Albert Street is different to Victoria; some side streets (like Minnie Street and Nash Street) are traffic funnels, while other areas are more concerned over parking. There were a number of suggestions for action from people living close to major intersections (especially Lygon and Victoria Streets) and new development projects.

In spite of this diversity, there was overwhelming support for limiting the entry of large vehicles, from 150 households (71.8 per cent of those surveyed). 52.2 per cent also supported reduced speed limits in these streets.

More bike lanes were popular (43.5 per cent), along with one way sections on roads (41.1 per cent) and limited entry at peak hour (41.1 per cent).

There were over ninety comments added in response to the question on options for traffic management. Many of these responses focussed on a particular street or intersection, and some possible solutions are contradictory (some people, for example, advocated parking on just one side of Albert Street and Victoria Streets, while others feared this would speed up traffic). There were a number of suggestions
to introduce one way sections in Albert Street, Victoria Street and David Street, but this might increase flows in side streets. As one resident noted:

“The biggest issue faced with trying to do anything to ‘calm’ traffic in Victoria Street (other than Council’s seeming lack of ability to understand that there is a traffic problem) is the fact that there are multiple dead end streets that run to the north off of Victoria ... in the past, as these residents have a say (rightfully so) in what happens to Victoria Street have usually overridden any concerns of Victoria Street residents, as they don’t have the same traffic issues as Victoria Street residents do.”

Rather than reprint the diversity of opinions in this summary report, we would recommend that Moreland Council needs to urgently develop an overarching traffic management plan for the Victoria and Albert Street corridor, in consultation with local residents. Moreland Council staff and elected councillors should prioritise this initiative as they move to finalise an implementation timeline for the Brunswick Structure Plan, and allocate finance to implement the plan’s vision on the ground.

A number of suggestions highlighted the need for Council action:

- “Much more money in council budget for traffic management”
- “Money should be allocated in this year’s budget for capital works and a works plan for these streets.”
- “Council should actively implement the Moreland Integrated Traffic Strategy”
- “Council needs staff with expertise in traffic management and how to make it work.”
- “Council needs to develop traffic management plans in consultation with residents.”
- “New developments must be required to plan for traffic management in a broader area, and big developments need to meet these costs, not existing ratepayers.”
- “Developers need to have council-approved plan to absolutely minimise effect on neighbourhood of traffic created by construction phase.”

In order to address these issues, Council needs to conduct updated traffic monitoring to update their data on traffic volume, allocate funds for these initiatives and – above all – consult more systematically with local residents, who have a wealth of knowledge about the reality on the ground.

Council needs to connect these local traffic management decisions to a greater focus on public transport, working with the State government to improve services (such as lobbying for new, longer trams on Lygon Street and extra carriages on the Upfield line train to help relieve the existing strain on public transport – one reason that leads many people to use their cars).

This report was compiled from the survey conducted in February and March 2011, by members of the Brunswick Resident’s Network. Thanks to Pam, Nic, Nancy, Nick, Ilana, Kaye, Pilar, Marg and others who helped distribute surveys and collate the responses and to Ilana for the cover photo.

The Brunswick Residents Network links local residents concerned with urban planning, transport, open space, and other community issues in our neighbourhood. To discuss the survey, offer to help with future activities or be added to our resident’s mailing list, please email albertstreet2020@gmail.com, or phone 0421840100.