

## **BONDI JUNCTION**

*In 1811 a road was built by soldiers to provide a route from the city of Sydney to the South Head of Sydney Harbour. Known as the South Head Road, it is now Oxford Street. From the late 1820s European settlers began building homes in the Bondi Junction area, then called Tea Gardens. In the 1880s the trams arrived and as Bondi was the junction for the tram line from the city it becomes known as the Bondi Junction and eventually just Bondi Junction.*

*Today Bondi Junction is the business, transport and retail centre of Waverley, it is ironically nick-named 'Construction Junction' for its high rise development. Council describes Bondi Junction as 'linking the city to the sea' as it is just 4 km east of Sydney's Central Business District.*

1957. An announcement is made that 'a huge satellite shopping city' is planned for the centre of Bondi Junction. The Bondi Junction shopping centre is under the joint control of Waverley and Woollahra Councils via the Council boundary down the centre of Oxford Street running from the Waverley Tram (now Bus) Depot to Bondi Road. Land values in this area approach £2,000 per foot. Council announces that extensive building alterations had been planned for Bondi Junction, including the remodelling of shops and offices and the building of new business premises.

1969. Plans to redesign and redevelop Bondi Junction at a cost of \$300 million are announced. The redevelopment revolves around the Eastern Suburbs Railway and the Eastern Suburbs Expressway, both scheduled to reach Bondi Junction by 1974. Proposals are contained in the Bondi Junction Study Plan prepared by the State Planning Authority, Waverley and Woollahra Councils and three State government departments over a period of two years.

One of the main proposals is the closing of Oxford Street between Newland and Waverley Streets, presently the main traffic thoroughfare, to form a pedestrian mall. A combination rail station and bus terminal is also announced, with the rail line being a twin-tunnel railway station situated under Bondi Junction with a bus terminal above. High rise commercial and residential buildings are included in the plan.

1974. The pedestrian mall, financed by Waverley and Woollahra Councils, is established to coincide with the railway and expressway opening.

1976. Bondi Junction Plaza, the biggest retail shopping centre built in the Eastern Suburbs, is opened by the NSW Governor. Its centre is The Church in the Market Place, built as a replacement for the Waverley Methodist Church, which had closed burdened by debt.

1979. Syd Einfeld Drive is completed and the project for an Oxford Street Mall goes ahead.-The Eastern Suburbs Railway opens and a new train station at the end of this is called Bondi Junction. It becomes the public transport gateway to Bondi Beach.

1998. The Bondi Junction commercial centre comes under the control of Waverley and Woollahra Councils and they decide to form a joint planning committee to oversee development of the commercial centre. The Council's new joint planning

authority gives them the power to act as consent authority to determine development applications, consider any proposed amendments to joint local environmental plans and development control plans. Each Council has equal representation. The largest development scheme, for mega-mall Westfield, is split across two Council areas. This specific redevelopment is taken out of both Councils' hands by the NSW State government with the Planning Minister claiming that the two Councils' were 'planning it to death'.

2004. The Bondi Junction Strategic Plan is released. Council describes it as a vision and action document. It lists strategies for Council to use in its everyday activities in the management of Bondi Junction. Not everything in the Strategic Plan is the direct responsibility of Council, but Council can often influence other levels of government in its planning and service delivery. Issues that the community says are important in Bondi Junction are: safety, transport (parking and congestion), buildings and environment (pollution, building design), community well being (including services and recreation), economic sustainability (shopping and restaurants).

2004-2007. Council uses these documents to guide planning and delivery of services: the Bondi Junction Centre Local Environmental Plan (2007), the draft Waverley Development Control Plan (2006) and the Bondi Junction Strategic Plan (2004).

2005. Council plans a \$140 million upgrade of Bondi Junction including: building a piazza, the boosting of office space and a campaign to drive out brothels. There are plans for a detailed revamp of the commercial centre.

2008. The NSW Department of Planning make significant changes to the Bondi Junction Local Environment Plan (LEP) boosting building density and deleting the affordable housing provision. Council rejects these changes to the LEP and fights back, lodging a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to determine who had made submissions for these changes to the Department. The information received from the FOI request did not offer any explanation.

Council announced that the plan provided some wins for the community, but acknowledged its disappointment with the final outcome. The NSW Department of Planning announces that it will review maximum height limits for the entire Waverley Council area causing widespread resident outrage. Emergency community meetings are held.

2009. The Bondi Junction Local Environment Plan is approved. The plan re-zones land within the 72-hectare Bondi Junction Centre. It is the product of six years' work and community consultations. As Bondi Junction grows the traffic is anticipated to increase and the issue of liveability come under pressure. The LEP includes: development of a town square in the centre of the Oxford Mall, creating improved access and safety for commuters to the Bondi Junction Bus/Rail Interchange.