



10 February 2011

Dear Residents and Business Operators

Backpacker Vehicles

Backpackers selling and living in their vehicles continues to be a problem for Council, residents and businesses in Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo.

It has not yet been possible to resolve this matter, despite action from Kings Cross Police and the City of Sydney because under the 1993 Local Government Act, Council has no power to prohibit these activities if they relate to the "driving, parking or use of any vehicle..." on a road or road related area.

Police can address crime and anti-social behaviour and fine defective vehicles, however many of the vehicles are legally registered.

City of Sydney rangers patrol Victoria Street and Brougham Street daily, and last year issued 3,000 fines in Victoria Street. However, some of these vehicles are registered to people who have returned overseas, and fines have limited impact. Successive Ministers for Roads refused my request to amend vehicle registration for overseas visitors to improve accountability for vehicles illegally parked.

In August 2010, the City introduced a tow away zone in these streets, which allows repeat illegally parked vehicles to be towed. Council has towed 22 vehicles, and owners must pay up to \$600 in fees and impounding charges before they can have their towed vehicle returned. In response to our request, hostels have stopped allowing non residents to use their facilities, and warn backpackers that vehicles will be towed.

Councils can take action on vehicles parked in car parks and on community land and you may have seen reports about other Councils doing this. I asked the Minister for Roads and the Minister for Local Government to return power to Councils to prevent people selling and living from their vehicles on public roads, however the RTA says the RTA won't support changes to roads legislation, so I have again asked the Minister for Local Government to return these powers to Councils.

Meanwhile, Council Rangers and Kings Cross Police will continue to target unroadworthy vehicles and patrol daily, and Council will review parking restrictions and survey the local area about introducing paid parking.

I encourage you to also call upon the Minister to empower Councils to act on this concern: Barbara Perry MP, Level 32 GMT, 1 Farrer Place Sydney or email office@perry.minister.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Clover Moore
Member for Sydney