

SURVEY OF THE UNOFFICIAL CROSSING AT THE QUAY

1.	<p>Background</p> <p>Over the years there have been many occasions when Living Streets has been approached about the dangers for pedestrians crossing the road opposite the old Woolworth site. We have had several discussions with the Traffic Section of Environment about the safety of this “unofficial” crossing. We are well aware of the background – i.e. that there used to be a zebra crossing and it was taken away.</p> <p>The issue has again been raised recently by one of our members. He poses the question whether the act of taking away the chain (in order to allow pedestrians to cross the road from the harbour side) does not make the Environment Department liable should a serious accident occur.</p> <p>The Living Streets Committee decided it needed to do a survey to gain the views of pedestrians crossing at this point. What follows is the result of that survey.</p>										
2.	<p>The survey</p> <p>The survey was undertaken on 4 separate days as follows: Thursday 29th September – 1.15 – 2 pm Friday 30th September – 9.30 to 10.15 Wednesday 5th October – 10.15 to 11.00 Monday 10th October – 10.45 to 12 noon</p> <p>The harbour side contra-flow system was in place for the last two surveys which slowed down the speed of the traffic coming from the Crown Pier.</p> <p>We designed the survey to be quite brief so that we didn’t hold up people too much. It consisted of the following questions:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center;">1.</td> <td>Did you feel safe?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2.</td> <td>If no, what would make it safer?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3.</td> <td>Why did you cross here rather than using the light controlled crossings?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4.</td> <td>Do you use the crossing after dark?</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5.</td> <td>Have you ever seen any near misses?</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Did you feel safe?	2.	If no, what would make it safer?	3.	Why did you cross here rather than using the light controlled crossings?	4.	Do you use the crossing after dark?	5.	Have you ever seen any near misses?
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3.	<p>Survey results</p> <p>82 survey forms were completed. Each form represented one or more people and we noted the number of children – 19 in total including babies in buggies.</p> <p>The actual number of people we surveyed was as follows: Residents: 95 Visitors: 3 Total: 98</p> <p>Male: 44 (45%) Female: 54 (55%)</p> <p>Age range: 16-30: 11 (11%) 30-50: 29 (30%) 50-65: 32 (33%) Over 65: 26 (27%)</p>										

	<p>Question 1: Did you feel safe? Yes: 30 (37%) No: 33 (40%) Neither “Yes” or “No” – i.e. qualified answers: 26 (32%) Qualified answers included the following: <i>Not too bad; Not always; Not with child & buggy; Not really; Sometimes; Not completely; Reasonably/relatively; Mostly/usually; Got used to it; Depends on the traffic; If you’re careful; If able bodied; As long as people stop.</i></p>
	<p>Question 2 – If no, what would make it safer? Although this question was meant for those who said “No” (or a qualified response) sometimes those who said “Yes” offered a suggestion as well. Zebra crossing: 35 (43%) Pedestrian lights: 21 (26%) Central reservation: 6 (7%) Move it along – past Quay Street: 4 (5%) Close it: 1 (1%)</p>
	<p>Question 3 – Why did you cross here etc. Parked in the Albert Pier: 74 (90%) Quicker: 8 (10%)</p>
	<p>Question 4 – do you use the crossing after dark? Yes: 27 (33%) No: 11 (13%) Occasionally/rarely: 2 (2%) N/A (not in Town after dark): 41 (50%)</p>
	<p>Question 5 – have you ever seen any near misses? Yes: 12 (15%) No: 63 (77%) Felt threatened: 2 (2%) Come close to hitting a few people (comment from a driver): 1 (1%)</p>
	<p>Additional comments by pedestrians: Those who said “No” Double lane on seaward side very dangerous Incredibly dangerous, particularly with pushchair (seaward 2 lanes) Will not cross with a buggy (10 out of 12 parents with buggies in the survey said “No”) Had some scrapes Vulnerable in the middle (elderly + parents with buggies) Near misses mostly in 2 lane area Scary</p> <p>Those who said “Yes” Yes, as long as people stop It works – done it since he was 4 years old Leave it as it is Drivers very polite/courteous Accident free (Traffic Warden) Yes, but depends on the traffic</p>

4.	<p>Observations/Conclusions</p> <p>Having spent several hours doing the surveys and watching how pedestrians interact with drivers, we believe that the crossing works <u>only because the vast majority of people using it are residents and drivers (parked in the Albert Pier).</u></p> <p>Unfortunately we were only able to survey 3 visitors. I witnessed one visiting couple experiencing a near miss crossing from the centre to the seaward side across the two lanes. A learner driver slowed down for them and looked as if they were stopping and then suddenly carried on. The visitors told me it was really scary and that they didn't know whether the traffic was going to stop or not. Had we been able to do the survey earlier in the year (in the high tourist season) the results might have been different.</p> <p>Those who said the crossing was dangerous mostly mentioned the two lane section on the seaward side. One mother told me that the problem is that when crossing from the Albert Pier side, one car will stop for you in the lane near you and you will start crossing and then end up in the middle of the road because another car in the central lane is failing to stop and has failed to see you. I saw a near miss exactly like this while doing the survey.</p> <p>It is rare that a pedestrian can cross all three lanes in one go. Invariably you have to wait in the middle of the road to cross the final bit. This was the other main safety concern mentioned by parents with buggies and children. The lack of space to wait in the centre of the road is very hazardous when you have young children.</p> <p>The elderly seemed to fare quite well – drivers tended to stop if they saw someone elderly and with a walking stick. Of those who said “No” 11 were over 65. There were 10 over 65's who said “Yes”.</p> <p>Several of the “Yes” pedestrians considered that there would be gridlock if you installed a crossing. We don't agree. We were surprised at how few vehicles were going through this area. There were many occasions when it was really easy for pedestrians to cross – ie. no traffic coming through at all. It would be useful to do a traffic count versus a pedestrian count.</p>
5.	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Living Streets approached this survey with an open mind. We have been following the UK and European developments on “Naked Streets” (or shared spaces) and feel there is some merit in the concept. All pedestrians crossing the road at this point have to make eye contact in order to negotiate a free passage and this appears to work.</p> <p>However, given the footfall in this area and the location of the Albert Pier car park, we feel that there is sufficient evidence to justify improving the safety for pedestrians - in particular, the safety of parents with children. We think a number of issues should be considered as a package:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move the crossing further away from the filter – perhaps past Quay Street 2. Install pedestrian lights synchronised with the ones across Fountain Street 3. Turn the seaward side into one lane 4. Build a central reservation with enough space for pedestrians (particularly with buggies) to wait