

The Sydney Morning Herald

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1973

On with the plaza

THIS WEEKEND work will begin on the extension of Martin Plaza from Pitt Street to Castlereagh Street. It is a development that will please every citizen who sees Sydney as something more than a noisy, fume-laden carpark. Yet that pleasure will inevitably be lessened by the need for it to be accompanied by a question and a comment. The question is whether it was really necessary for the State Government to spend eight months dealing with Sydney City Council's application for the Stage Two area to be rezoned. The comment flows from the question; Macquarie Street procrastination has raised the cost of Stage Two by about \$75,000.

The first component of that figure is the \$23,645 allocated by the council for temporary developments to ready the Pitt Street-Castlereagh Street area for the Opera House opening and Waratah Festival celebrations. The other \$50,000 is a conservative estimate of the degree to which delay has added to the cost of

the area's permanent development, not expected to be complete until 1975. To deplore this waste of money might seem to smack of crying over spilt milk; it is to be hoped, however, that it will serve to spur on the State Government to swift action on plans for Stage Three of the plaza.

Reasonable expedition is warranted for reasons other than rising costs. Stage Three may well become the most imaginative part of the entire plaza development. Originally, it was planned that the plaza would end on the western footpath of Macquarie Street; now the Commonwealth and State Governments have before them a council proposal to extend it across Macquarie Street and on to the green expanses of the Domain. That can happen only if the two Governments agree on the re-siting of Sydney Hospital on a five-acre block of Commonwealth land at Woolloomooloo. The quid pro quo would be a Commonwealth office block on the present hospital site.

Open Government

INTRODUCING the bill to establish an Industries Assistance Commission to replace the Tariff Board, the Prime Minister referred to it as "this historical bill". The description is apt.

turers or a fertiliser subsidy to primary producers without any public examination of the merits of and justification for its actions. Second, it will bring cohesion