



- **Page 4, Paragraph 18, 19, 20 and 21 - refers to options - number and date**

Nine (9) Options were out for Public consultation in 2009. This was part of a Community update document dated July 2009 released by the then Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) now known as the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).

- **Page 4, Paragraph 22 and 23 - meaningful opportunity to negotiate**

As part of the community consultation document, the then Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) now known as the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) undertook displays and community workshops. The content of these discussions is not available.

- **Page 5, Paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 - refers to road level of new bridge**

The new bridge is higher on the Windsor end (Southern side) compared to the Blue Mountains end (Northern side). Based on the information we have been able to obtain, the level at the Windsor end is 11.9m (AHD) and 10.0m (AHD) at the Blue Mountains end. The one-in-five flood Level at Windsor is 11.1m (AHD).

- **Page 5, Paragraph 15 refers to a crossing designed to sit above the level of a one chance in five flood.**

Further investigation has revealed that the level (10.0m) Blue Mountains end (Northern side) of the proposed replacement bridge will be below the one-in-five flood level, the operational flood level of the bridge may be less than the one-in-five level. The reason for this is referred to on Page 6, Paragraph 2.

- **Page 6, Paragraphs 2, refers to the NSW Government's Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities Study**

Infrastructure NSW will soon be releasing its Traffic Planning and Evacuation plans to support and inform its earlier *Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities Study*. It is likely that the Infrastructure NSW plans will include details of the hydrostatic pressure that will be placed on bridge structures as flood waters rise. This will in turn affect the calculation of the flood level that will determine the point at which a bridge will be closed to traffic. The outcome of this is that whilst the road level of the bridge may be slightly less than the one-in-five flood level, the point at which the bridge is closed to traffic may be substantially lower than the one-in-five flood level. In terms of flooding, the worst case scenario is that the Government may be proposing a bridge that provides little if any increased protection against flooding.

It may also be beneficial to have the following information in relation to the various levels that are being considered.

• Average water level at Windsor Bridge:	1.87m
• Road level of current Windsor Bridge:	7.0m
• Lowest road level of proposed replacement bridge:	10.0m
• One-in-five flood level:	11.1m
• One-in-one hundred flood level:	17.3m
• Probable maximum flood level:	26.5m

Finally, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on document in relation to the Public Inquiry, held on 13 April 2018. Should you wish to clarify any details, please do not hesitate to contact me at Council on phone 4560 4410.

Yours faithfully

~break/

MARY LYONS-BUCKETT, Mayor, Hawkesbury City Council, affirmed and examined

PETER CONROY, General Manager, Hawkesbury City Council, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Councillor Lyons-Buckett would you like to make an opening statement before we proceed with questions from the Committee?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I would. We have provided some material to be distributed as well, which I will refer to in my opening statement.

The CHAIR: The secretariat will pass that around.

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Thank you for the opportunity to attend the inquiry today and answer questions on behalf of council. Council is opposed to the current proposal to build a replacement bridge across the Hawkesbury River at Windsor. Our opposition is based on our desire to protect the township of Windsor, the third oldest settlement in Australia; to protect Thompson Square, the oldest town square in Australia; and to protect the existing Windsor Bridge, a widely acknowledged heritage item. We believe that the town of Windsor, its residents and businesses will be best served if the New South Wales Government redirects funding to a new bridge project that: does not repeat the mistakes of the past, as evidenced by the Windsor tollhouse—in the material handed out there is a photo showing how heavily compromised that heritage item is due to the building of a road in 1976—which avoids damaging Australia's oldest town square; which facilitates increased economic activity with the Windsor town centre; which provides a better response to the issue of flooding and the movement of people during periods of flooding; and which genuinely addresses traffic congestion—congestion that will not be eased with the new replacement bridge and that is set to increase as the population of the Hawkesbury and surrounding areas increases.

The Greater Sydney Region Plan forecasts an increase in population that will require 725,000 new homes and space for 817,000 new jobs in the new western parklands city over the next 20 years. This translates to an increase in personal and business movements in Windsor. However, council's position should not be seen as resistance to growth. We welcome change and we recognise that growth is occurring in our local and wider area. We do not object to the idea of development or construction occurring in our area in order to properly address future challenges. However, we object to a bridge project that is ill-conceived and the governance of which does not reflect true collaboration, has never followed conventional approaches, has never addressed community concerns about heritage, traffic impacts and flooding, and that reflects a narrow-minded insistence on removing the existing bridge. These concerns are particularly pertinent at present with the recent archaeological salvage work that has discovered brick barrel drains that date back to 1814. Professor Ian Jack's report and his resume are included in the attachments we have provided.

These recent findings beg the question: How can the New South Wales Government progress with tendering for the project without extensive investigation to understand the nature and extent of these structures? Continuation will only significantly risk changes to the scope of the project cost variations. Does the Government not remember the Auditor-General's report on the "Tibby" Cotter bridge? Again, we have provided some information on that. The town of Windsor was founded by Governor Macquarie and the original bridge was opened on 20 August 1874. The bridge is listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register. Likewise, Thompson Square is also a listed heritage item described as:

... the only public space remaining from the original town and has played an important part in the history of the town. It is the only remaining civic space as laid out by Governor Macquarie and is a vital precinct in the preservation of the early Colonial character of Windsor. The Square reflects Macquarie's visionary schemes for town planning excellence in the infant colony.

Furthermore, the New South Wales Heritage Council, in its advice to the RMS in 2011, described option one—that is the preferred RMS option—as having significant impacts on heritage in and around Thompson Square including impacts on the setting, views and relationships of the buildings around the square and their relationship to the square as a planned urban space. Negative impacts on heritage buildings include the likely disturbance and destruction of archaeological evidence of the 1790s town, which predates the creation of Thompson Square, and impacts on maritime archaeology related to the early settlement of Windsor.

We believe that the RMS's determination to remove the existing bridge, its continued ignorance on the heritage values of Thompson Square, the surrounding streetscape and built form of the square has led to a poor solution for our community. In attachment No. 4 in the information we have provided, contrary to a unanimous view amongst heritage specialists, the RMS chose to identify Thompson Square as the open space in the middle and basically excluded the buildings that frame it. Would they apply the same thinking to public squares in Rome or Venice?

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The State heritage listing describes the existing bridge as having a high level of historic, technical, anaesthetic and social significance as an important historical and physical landmark in one of the State's preeminent historic towns and in the wider Sydney region. It is the oldest extant crossing of the Hawkesbury River. The Windsor Bridge has landmark qualities as only one of two bridge crossings of the Hawkesbury River in the Hawkesbury area and, as such, it defines the surrounding network of roads. The addition of a reinforced concrete beam deck to replace the timber deck in the 1920s is a relatively early use of this technology. How is it that some cities can preserve many bridges, but the New South Wales Government struggles to preserve any? Again, we have shown you some examples of the 18 movable bridges within two miles in Chicago.

In council's opinion, the heritage bridge should be retained and over time its role transitioned to a bridge for active transport movements across the Hawkesbury River between the township of Windsor and the public open space adjacent to the western side of the river with an option for additional lightweight local vehicular traffic. The project also raises a number of procedural and governance anomalies. First, the term and the content of a strategic conservation management plan are a product of the approval for the Windsor Bridge replacement project. It is a one-off term. It has no origin in any legislation, Act or regulation; it never existed before this development and its form and content is still evolving.

Next, despite having no reference point, no definition is included in the state significant infrastructure approval to define or explain what a Strategic Conservation Management Plan is. Further, the reference to the strategic conservation management plan varies throughout the document. At times, it is referred to as the "Strategic Conservation Management Plan ", and on other occasions it is referred to as the CMP. We have referenced that in attachment six. This, in turn, creates a further issue, as the abbreviation "CMP" is a term commonly used by the Heritage Council of New South Wales and related parties to reference a Conservation Management Plan. Conservation Management Plans are developed in accordance with published guidelines and are regularly endorsed by the Heritage Council. The strategic conservation management plan is not being prepared in accordance with the Heritage Council guidelines and is not endorsed by the Heritage Council. We have included the Heritage Council document in attachment seven.

The boundaries of heritage aspects of Thompson Square vary dramatically across the project, depending on who is responsible for what. In the case of both the State Heritage Register and the council conservation area, the boundaries are virtually identical—we show that in attachment eight. In the case of the state significant approval, there is both confusion and disagreement between the boundaries of the council conservation area, nominated extent of the strategic CMP study area, and the nominated extent of the strategic CMP study area to front facades within property boundaries. Condition B1 requires the submission of a strategic conservation management plan for the project area on the southern side of the Hawkesbury River, as shown in appendix two of the strategic conservation management plan study area, where ever that might be. We have put an extract of that approval in attachment nine.

Furthermore, the project is not proceeding in accordance with the accepted practices and conventions associated with a conservation management plan project. Normally, such a project proceeds as follows: step one, complete the conservation management plan first. This provides the policy direction and priorities for any development to achieve. Step two: the proponent then commences the design process, responding to the policies and objectives contained in the conservation management plan. In this instance, RMS approached the project in the reverse order, and, as a consequence, the Department of Planning and Environment commissioned an independent report that observed that: "it appears that the scope throughout much of the duration of the project has focused on justifying the preferred option, as opposed to undertaking a thorough investigation into alternative options."

Finally, it appears that when honest mistakes were made, people remained silent, rather than correcting the misunderstandings. For example, it appears that in the case of an ultimately unsuccessful challenge to the state significant infrastructure approval by a local community group, *Community Action for Windsor Bridge Inc v NSW Roads and Maritime Services & anor* [2015] NSWLEC 167 (CAWB v Minister), Judge Brereton referred to the existence of the conservation management plan. However, at the time of the determination, the conservation management plan had not been released, only guidelines for developing a conservation management plan had been released. Now, there is an opportunity to pause the project and strategically consider an expanded range of options, if for no other reason than that the Government has recently released its Western Sydney transport corridors plan. This provides an opportunity to explore superior options for the flooding, heritage and transport issues that currently remain unresolved. We have attached the transport corridors plan in the final attachment. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. That was a very comprehensive opening statement.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Good afternoon and thank you very much for coming. The council's submission states that RMS has never given the community an option other than dismantling Windsor Bridge.

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Page 2

You have said that there was "a narrow-minded insistence on removing the existing bridge." Could you elaborate on why you said that?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: That is exactly how it appears. None of the original options that were put forward in the initial stages included a bypass. Several of them were not feasible options, as it turned out. In terms of removing the bridge, there has been an insistence throughout that the bridge has to go. Any suggestion for it to be used for another purpose has not been taken up. That is a major flaw. It has been a very clear message from the Government that the removal of the bridge is easily as important as the creation of a new bridge.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I want to clarify that the council's view is that the bridge be retained and refurbished?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Yes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Do you have a view on the bypass?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I would certainly like to see a bypass, but, as alluded to in the opening statement, we have just seen both the draft transport strategy for 2056 and, of course, the recent release of the corridors plan. In amongst this there is a bridge that is not going to be of any benefit to our community, and yet there are various other strategies being developed. I think that it needs to be stopped and then we need to look at the area overall, so that we get a better outcome.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I want to move on to the issue of flooding. It is an area of particular interest to me. When I worked at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, I did the Hastings flood management plan and the Camden Haven flood management plan. I know that councils are intimately involved in flood management. From your submission, I understand that the council has some issues with the flood immunity claims about the bridge that have been made by RMS. Could you give us more information on that?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: If you are familiar with where the bridge is, you will know that both the entry points onto the bridge from both sides come from very low-lying land. As well as that, the roads that lead off those entry points dip and move through various stages that are very flood prone. While the proposed new bridge is slightly higher in its main structure, it would not make any significant difference to the flood accessibility to the township because the other local roads would be cut anyway.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That is my understanding from how I read it as well. There were also quite a few concerns raised about traffic modelling and the various independent consultants that looked at the EIS and were engaged by the Department of Planning and Environment. Do you have concerns with the traffic modelling, or is it your view that if the bridge is built there will be more traffic?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Generally, we have a major congestion issue. We do have two of the major routes leading out of Sydney—one to the west and one to the north—and have a growing number of vehicles on those roads. This is not a solution; it is a sub-standard solution to our traffic woes. I am not sure of the exact numbers because I do not do that, but, as someone who lives there, I can see, on an annual basis, the increasing issues with traffic congestion, particularly with heavy vehicles coming through the townships.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Has council ever done any traffic modelling in and around those areas?

Mr CONROY: We recently commissioned a study and the results of that are being validated at the moment. That study is for the network north of the Hawkesbury River. The preliminary findings are that the bridge is not going to resolve the congestion that exists there; it is merely going to move it from one location to another within the footprint of the town centre. Therefore, it is not a solution for traffic congestion.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Will you be releasing the report once it is finalised?

Mr CONROY: Our hope is to release it in the next three to four weeks. If we can provide a copy to the inquiry, we will certainly do it.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Some experts have also expressed the view that the existing historic Windsor Bridge could, at the very least, be kept for pedestrian and cyclist use. But what you are saying is that it could be used for even more, for vehicles as well.

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I would imagine if it had some form of repair and perhaps even a little bit of widening or something—I am not a bridge expert—it could certainly be used for local traffic if the heavy vehicle traffic and passing-through traffic was taken via a bypass.

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PAGE 3

PARA 1

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Are you aware of any housing or property developments or proposals that would benefit from the Windsor Bridge replacement project? We heard that there was a housing development close by.

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Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: There is one at Jacaranda Ponds. It is for around ~~567~~ lots, if I recall, which is significant in our area even though it is not in the growth sector areas that are much larger. That project would benefit and it had a provision in its original approval stating that it would go ahead when the Windsor Bridge was replaced. It has not proceeded to date and it has a voluntary planning agreement. It is at Glossodia which, of course, you can access via North Richmond as well, but probably the main access in to Windsor would go via the Windsor Bridge.

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Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Are there any industrial developments or proposals that you are aware of, such as maybe for sand mining that could also benefit from the Windsor Bridge replacement project?

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Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I am not aware of any actual proposals that exist, although of course I have heard talk about such things. I do believe that people have proposed that that could be a reason for removing the current bridge.

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The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I will ask a few questions to establish some preliminaries about the council. How many residents do you currently have?

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Mr CONROY: Sixty-six thousand. ~~ACTUALLY~~ 66,450

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You have a planning department, I presume.

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: We do.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What would be the size of it?

Mr CONROY: It is in the order of six assessment officers and four strategic planners.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you also have an engineering division or a public works division or some combination of the two?

Mr CONROY: We do, yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you also have the ability to undertake traffic modelling and traffic flow audits?

Mr CONROY: Historically, the council has not funded that sort of function. We have a proposal to include it in the next budget. At the moment, we outsource that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Forgive me if this sounds like an inane question. To the extent to which there are experts in the Hawkesbury community, is it reasonable for us to assume that that is the Hawkesbury council?

Mr CONROY: I am not sure I understand the question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I will assume that you are not disputing my assertion that you guys are experts in your community. Do you think the RMS has properly engaged the expertise of the council as it has developed the project?

PARA 18

Mr CONROY: From a staff point of view, I can say that we were presented with some options. That probably would not be the way that I would have progressed a project such as this. I would have started with some objectives. Particularly in the case of Windsor, I would have started with some heritage, economic and flooding objectives. I would then have developed options that responded to those objectives. But that is not really the approach that was taken in this instance.

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The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you give us a time period of when you were presented those options by RMS?

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Mr CONROY: I think they go back to about 2008.

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Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Yes, about 10 years ago.

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The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Were you given any meaningful opportunity to negotiate the parameters of those options with RMS?

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Mr CONROY: I will have to take that question on notice and go back to speak to staff in the council. I have only been there for 10 months so I would not want to be too specific in my answer. We certainly talked to RMS and its staff.

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Page 4

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When the Department of Planning and Environment was making an assessment of the project, did it invite the council to submit any conditions that it thought should have been attached to planning approval?

Mr CONROY: I do not believe so.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Were you given any advance warning as to the nature of the conditions that they would attach? Incidentally, you have been very helpful in providing that in the appendix here.

Mr CONROY: I do not believe so.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did they show you a draft and ask what you thought?

Mr CONROY: I do not believe so.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Throughout this process, has the council been an elected body or has it been under administration?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: No.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is it correct that as the elected body of the Hawkesbury community, you have not been given the opportunity to have an input into the final planning conditions which were attached to this and are legally enforceable?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I am not sure what happened before I was on council in terms of what the elected members went to do. I have been on council since 2012. I have not ever—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: If we were to look at the existing planning conditions, are there any features of those conditions that you would say are because of the Hawkesbury council?

Mr CONROY: No.

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I will go back to an issue you raised on pages 11 and 12 of your submission. I am very interested in the conversation we had this morning about the issue of flooding. You note that one of the objectives of doing this in the first place was "to improve flood immunity by providing for a one-in-five year flood event". That is one of the keys for doing this project. You say, "There is no evident increase in flood immunity benefits. Windsor Road and Wilberforce Road are cut early in a flood event and Windsor ultimately becomes an isolated flood island." We heard more about that this morning. The members can read the rest of the submission themselves. When you put this to the RMS, what did it say? When you said, "You might be building a slightly higher bridge but all the approach roads are all going to be flooded anyway, so it is really a false undertaking?", did RMS have any comments?

Mr CONROY: From a technical perspective, the RMS response is that the one-in-five breach—that is, the frequency of one-in-five chance—is better than the current ~~one-in-two~~ ^{seven point three (7.3) level}, and you cannot dispute that. But the fact that the one-in-five level is in the order of ~~probably seven to 10~~ metres lower than the one-in-100, it is not really a good solution. If there is a flood, we need to be able to get people out of the floodplain safely and quickly but also we need to be able to get people across the floodplain rather than it dividing the community. Historically, that has been a real issue for us in flooding. When there is a flood, we have people on either side of the river and they cannot get in contact with each other. The council's position is that it wants a permanent, high-level, all-purpose crossing across that Hawkesbury Valley and that is what we should be pursuing as part of this project, not a one-in-five year solution which is prone to regular disruption.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I will ask a deliberately leading question. Would you almost say that by proposing something that, in fact, is not a real solution, you are perhaps endangering the community because there is no proposal to allow people to leave in the case of a flood? We have discussed other bridges in the past but in fact it is providing a false promise. Can you comment on that?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Given that the current bridge is lower, I imagine that it could be said that it also endangers people. As I alluded to before, in terms of what we need to be looking at now, because we have also got a flood strategy from the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley which includes a number of things, we need to be really seriously looking at how we get people out of these areas. We are going to have lots of issues with cumulative overland flooding from the development that has been done already on the fringes of the city. If there is public infrastructure being built it needs to be properly giving people immunity from flood, not just a little bit in the centre of a bridge.

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PARA 1
The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I think one of the central issues that has come out this morning is the inadequacy of the planning for future flooding. At the top of page 12 you make reference to the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Management Taskforce and the work that it is doing. Can you talk to us about the role of that task force and when you expect there to be some recommendations?

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Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: They did release last ~~July~~ ^{May} ~~I think it was~~—the Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities study. That strategy has a number of parts. They centre around things varying from raising the Warragamba Dam wall to more localised strategies such as an education campaign for flood awareness. It became very apparent when they were doing that work that there is a huge number of people living in the valley who have no idea about the flooding. There has been no resilience building to equip people to deal with a major disaster in flood. Also we need to be completing the evacuation routes that are incomplete and which is why Windsor becomes an island when there is a flood.

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The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: How do the views and comments of that task force apply to the issue that we are debating today?

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Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I would imagine, given that their objective is to mitigate as fully as possible against flooding in the valley, not that they have said anything specifically about the Windsor Bridge, that they would expect any infrastructure being put in place to be as safe and as adequate to mitigate against flooding as possible.

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Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: This morning when RMS witnesses were giving evidence they said that the proposed bridge provided a high level of flood resilience. Would you agree with that statement?

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Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: No.

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Mr SCOT MacDONALD: On page 8 of your submission you say:

However, we recognise that the Bridge, and how it is used in its current state, is untenable. Further, we recognise the costs of renovating the bridge and additional infrastructure and improvements to meet expected growth ...

We heard this morning from RMS that if they go down the route of refurbishment it would be six to 12 months, from memory. Surely it would be a concern to your community if they go down that path?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I have heard alternative views from people who have told me what they have been told by engineers. I cannot really comment on that because if that is what they said then that is what they said. I believe if that were the case the bridge would not be being allowed to be operated as it is. It has no load limiting on it. It is used by a massive amount of traffic every day. I would imagine with some form of repair it would have a lot more longevity than that.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: They talked about longevity of 10 years to 20 years but a refurbishment would mean a closure for some period. If I understand you right, your preference is to pause the process. Have you got a time frame in mind that you would need to review everything you wanted to review and get some work under way whether that is on a new bridge or a refurbishment?

Mr CONROY: I think the time line that we are suggesting would be the Government's own time line. They have just released the corridors for Western Sydney. A number of those corridors that are under investigation are in the vicinity of Richmond and Windsor. We would like to work with the Government to those time lines to explore an alternative to this location that satisfies commuter and emergency needs for Richmond and the Hawkesbury generally and Windsor. I think that is the time line that we would like to work with together with the State Government. examine

The CHAIR: Are you able to put on the record your understanding of what those time lines are in the investigation?

Mr CONROY: At the moment the consultation process concludes on 1 June this year. We will be certainly making a submission, as will a lot of other parties, and we will be exploring some of those opportunities in our submission.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: That is for the Castlereagh route, correct?

Mr CONROY: That is correct.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Mr Conroy, I assume you have engineers on your staff.

Mr CONROY: We do.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you have somebody who is qualified in bridge engineering?

Mr CONROY: No, we do not.

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The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Have your engineers looked at the existing bridge and made an assessment of the RMS estimations for rehabilitation and so on?

Mr CONROY: They have reviewed a number of documents. One of the challenges for a lot of stakeholders is the divergence of views on the condition of the bridge. There has been material presented by former RMS employees who have presented a different view to current RMS employees. I think there is a need for a process that takes a lot of that uncertainty out of it. Obviously the answer is somewhere between the two. But again, as the *Mayor* referred to in her submission, it is possible to retain these heritage bridges and to use them. Whether the ongoing use of it is a major heavy transport thoroughfare or whether it is a local traffic thoroughfare that links both sides of the river and expands the Windsor township operation to both sides of the river, I think that is part of the conversation that needs to happen.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: A new bridge over the river to accommodate the Castlereagh corridor would more than likely be between Penrith and Richmond, would it not?

Mr CONROY: There are options for a corridor between Windsor and Richmond as well. Again, we have started the process of investigating that and we will do that with our transport consultants.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: If that were to be the case there could be a new bridge over the river that would accommodate the Castlereagh and Bells Line of Road connection as well as the Putty Road connection. Is that your view?

Mr CONROY: Correct.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: I think you referred to a high-level bridge. What do you mean by that in terms of AHD or flood recurrence or whatever?

Mr CONROY: The State Government's study for the Hawkesbury floodplain as a starting point adopts the probable maximum flood. That is the absolute worst case scenario. That puts the flood level at around about 19.2 metres. The one-in-100 flood level is about 17.6 metres.

26.3
The Hon. RICK COLLESS: To put that in perspective, I think the 17-metre level would still leave George Street in Windsor out of water, would it not?

The northern section between Baker Street and Bridge Street is just
Mr CONROY: *Just* out of water, is my understanding. But it is a rise of six storeys in height above the river. We are suggesting that there is benefit in giving consideration to that high-level bridge that provides an evacuation route but also provides an alternative means of crossing the river in emergency situations whether it is flooding or fire or, importantly, the closure of the Great Western Highway so that it gives us an alternative way of crossing the river.

over five
The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The Jim Anderson Bridge escape route is 17 metres. Is that correct?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I think so.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: When you are talking about a new high-level bridge you are talking about a similar height?

Mr CONROY: That is correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: We heard evidence this morning from the RMS that the bridge in its current form is unsustainable into the medium and long term. You have expressed support for the retention of the current bridge. We have just heard that current RMS staff have different views from people who were there previously. What is council using to evaluate those divergent views in order to support the idea of the retention of the current bridge? How is council putting more weight on the views of former staff as opposed to the staff who are currently assessing the bridge? Given the costs they were outlined today, how would council support the retention of the current bridge if that is what it is advocating for?

less than a one-in-five
Mr CONROY: One of the first things that needs to be determined is: If the current bridge is to be retained, what is its role? As I said earlier, it is a *one in two year* crossing so it is never going to be a viable, strategic transport route across the Hawkesbury. That has to come in the form of another bridge—that is, the high-level crossing that we are suggesting. If it is going to be retained it is going to be more for local purposes, local needs. At the moment we have got a river that runs along the edge of Windsor, there is a large recreation area on one side and the township on the other.

We would like to explore the opportunity to keep the bridge as a means of moving between both sides of the river, which means that its future use is not as a heavy transport and heavy haulage bridge; it is as a local traffic route for pedestrians, cyclists and light motor vehicles. That is a different sort of proposition in managing that structure going forward and the costs of managing it going forward. Again, we would probably be happy to

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participate in a conversation with the State Government about options for doing that. The dilemma for us is that that is not something that has been actively pursued up until now.

The Hon. WES FANG: That is a bit different. You are now talking about exploring the possibility of retaining it as opposed to advocating that it is retained.

Mr CONROY: We are advocating that it should be retained and we are indicating our support to work with the RMS to do that in the context that I have just spoken.

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: If I could just add to that because I think you are looking for an indicator of why we would be advocating for that based on material from someone who used for the RMS as opposed to the current direction of the RMS? Speaking from a non-professional point of view in terms of engineering but speaking as an elected person, and knowing that there is a strong majority who feel the same and support the same thing, there has been no indication of anything wrong with that bridge. I would imagine if you see that a bridge is failing there would have been incidents, load limits and things that would indicate that there was something very wrong with it. Having read the reports from the retired engineers, I think people have a general feeling. When you drive on the bridge—I do not have a problem with it, I drive on it all the time—there is a feeling amongst people that it is not as dire as is pointed out.

The Hon. WES FANG: I am not an engineer by any stretch of the imagination but I take the advice of the RMS in the evidence that was presented today. I am a qualified pilot and I understand the value of things like non-destructive testing. While things may not appear to fail, it is what you cannot see. The evidence today was, for example, that the case columns are shrinking, wearing away, the concrete issues and all those sorts of things. If the costs for the retention of that bridge are as expensive as those given to this Committee in evidence, is the council prepared to assist the RMS with the cost of the maintenance of that bridge?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I would imagine that would be a decision the council would have to take once the figures were known.

Mr CONROY: We do have some figures—I think they are available to the inquiry—that between about 1996 and 2012 ~~about \$5,000~~ ^{between \$5,700 and \$8,700} a year was spent by the RMS on the bridge. You can manage a bridge to a particular outcome and maybe if you spent a little bit more in preventative maintenance you could ensure the longevity of the bridge. There has not been a lot of money spent in recent years. That is an historical sum of money that was spent.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You identified the Western Sydney corridors plan as one new development from the State Government since the planning approval. Another was the emergence of the Greater Sydney Commission and the design of the district plan. I presume Hawkesbury council has participated in that to the extent that any council has?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: Yes, we have.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Please bear in mind that I have no idea what is those plans. What is your view of the extent of any alignment between those strategies?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: We are part of the Western City District Plan. I would not think that it aligns too well. At the end of our submission there are a number of contradictions that that project would have with the content of the district plan.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Could you briefly summarise those contradictions as you see them?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I will read them:

Planning Priority W6: Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage: 'The conservation and interpretation of places and values of heritage significance is required to give current and future generations a better understanding of history and people's past experiences. Sympathetic adaptive re-use of heritage is an important way to conserve significance. Improved public access and connection to heritage through interpretation is also essential.'

It contradicts that planning priority. The second one is:

Planning Priority W11: Growing investment, business opportunities and jobs in strategic centres: '[Richmond-Windsor] has significant heritage values including some of the oldest buildings in Australia and an emerging tourism base focused on colonial history, rural character, agriculture, environmental assets including UNESCO World Heritage areas and the Hawkesbury River.'

The third one is:

Planning Priority W16: Protecting and enhancing scenic and cultural landscapes: 'The scenic and cultural landscapes of the Western City District contribute to the identity and international profile of Greater Sydney. Scenic and cultural landscapes

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encourage an appreciation of the natural environment, protect heritage and culture, and create economic opportunities, particularly for recreation and tourism.'

It also does not align with the various objectives included in the Western Sydney city deal—looking forward to 30-minute cities and having people in close contact to where they work from where they live, et cetera.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: You and others have mentioned the two retired engineers. Do you think it would be worthwhile for the Committee to hear from those retired engineers?

Ms LYONS-BUCKETT: I would expect so. That would give a technical perspective I guess.

The CHAIR: Thank you for attending today's hearing. Your insight has been critical. There should always be coordination between various levels of government. The Committee values the evidence you have given today, particularly your supplementary submission. Replies to any questions taken on notice should be within 21 days of their receipt.

(The witnesses withdrew)