

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 18 December 2017

Partially
Confidential

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I'm writing to you as a concerned tax payer and voter who is and ex-resident and current traveller to the Hawkesbury every day.

The family moved 2 years ago, to Schofields, after 15 years of living in the Hawkesbury. My husband just couldn't do the morning station run from Glossodia via car or bus, as it was taking over 40 minutes to travel 13 kms.

My family and I feel the construction of this new bridge will do nothing for the plight of Hawkesbury residents and local traffic.

I currently travel to the Hawkesbury and cross Windsor bridge most days, and my children are employed in the Hawkesbury area.

The proposed replacement option is not a solution. As for traffic, the RMS's own statistics and tax payer funded studies show it will be almost incapable of functioning properly before it opens. Please confirm this fact in the Committee's report as it one of the 'root causes' of community outrage as the RMS facts when given proper consideration equate to 'common sense'

The bridge lane size will increase minimally from the current 3m (wider than the harbour bridge at 2.8) to 3.3m, and all this with an extra set of traffic signals means traffic approaching on either side of the bridge having to unnecessarily and dangerously merge from two lanes down to 1.

Nothing will change, if anything greater risk and danger will be the result for Hawkesbury residents and taxpayer money will be wasted on this less than bandaid solution where a long term solution for all, would be money better spent on one of the three community identified crossing locations; all are viable alternatives according to eminent Fellows of the Institute of Engineers Australia and the RMS officers.

Please confirm the 'alternative propositions' in the Committee's report as it another of the 'root causes' of community outrage as the alternatives when given proper consideration equate to 'common sense' and 'value for money'.

This current bridge solution will not alleviate flood disruption, will solve no traffic congestion, (in fact could make the current traffic much worse) will destroy historic locations and] material(brick barrel drains) and has more than 40,000 signatures against it
.Our Government which has accumulated a large and ongoing surplus from the 'rivers of gold' collected from citizen rates, levies and taxes from property dealings doesn't want to
[; a)] communicate with concerned locals and [b)] is not interested in spending the extra windfall gains, ie tax money to give the Hawkesbury a proper solution to deal with the extra traffic movements and increased population growth.

The local member has become renowned for his absence and offhanded disregard of community concerns, which puts seriously his elected position at risk in March 2019. He would do well to heed the Ides of March.

I have pondered the reason for the push for such a solution, there are other options, and although more expensive, would be far more beneficial to the community and the township of Windsor and provide a long term solution.

My opinion is the push for sand is the cause.

There is a need for sand for the ungodly apartment gold rush and new airport.

Kurnell is running out, and Maroota the same, 2 large sand mines are currently in NSW planning in SSD 15 71 20 Yengo rd and Tinda Creek, the proposal and EIS has been put forward by Anthony Elias (another relation of Mr. Eddie Obeid) of Chase Management, the EIS states that large trucks will exit from the proposed mine site and travel down the Putty road. [A road never intended for mining operations.]

The proposed sand mine will be, according to documents, projected to move up to 7,000,000 tonnes of sand from Yengo rd and a current upscaled total of 300,000 tonnes per annum from Tinda creek for the next 30 years. [Please confirm these facts in the Committee's report as a contribution to the 'root

causes' of community outrage as the covert facts when given proper overt consideration equate to transparent 'common sense'.]

The EIS states that the expectation of projected truck movements of 30 per day will not be putting extra traffic pressure on the arterial Putty road, but the EIS states that Putty road carries approx 1529 traffic movements per day, but traffic from other areas of the Hawkesbury also join Putty road, converging at the Windsor bridge which currently records 2200 heavy vehicle movements per day, and 21,000 vehicle movements per day in total, certainly enough to warrant a bypass or two or three if Government was serious about future proofing the district as to development.

I am wondering if the EIS is presuming that large trucks eg .double b's may be transporting that sand ?, according to the RMS heavy vehicle route map double bs are not meant to drive beyond the intersection of Packer Rd and Putty Rd, and therefore should not be allowed to drive to the sand mine via Windsor, I'm wondering if the projections of truck movements and impact have been underestimated in the EIS (page 44) as perhaps they will have to use large trucks with trailer which move 1/2 as much sand as the double bs,(large trucks with trailers, only 30 tonnes per truck.)this would mean twice as many truck movements.

Please confirm these facts in the Committee's report as further contribution to the unrest, the 'root causes' of community outrage, as the oblique facts when illuminated by this Committees beacon of truth a proper overt consideration will equate to transparent 'common sense'.

https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/8c67a17abbc8438e2e19d1ba23d6fd7b/September%202015%20-%20Preliminary%20Environmental%20Assessment_Putty%20Road%20Sand%20Quarry.pdf

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7120

The new bridge will destroy some very important history by carving a massive scar through Australia's oldest town square, which is defined as being bordered by the adjoining streets and not just the 'green space', vibration will compromise the health of historic buildings on the road edge , and noise pollution from large trucks will destroy the ability of people to be able to sit in the new park and have a quiet lunch. Also with 2 sets of traffic lights, trucks having to brake will cause more noise and could increase traffic risk.(There will be a pedestrian crossing at the 2nd set of traffic lights.)

"Private profits over public heritage" has been a theme well evidenced in NSW since the days of the Red Coats.

Creation of Thompson's Square was a community reaction to the centralised control and bullying, by a much reviled faction of the despotic elites dedicated to self-interest and private profits.

It appears the Red Coats are alive and well in Macquarie St. A principle city street named after the founder and protector of the Hawkesbury.]

The proposed SSD (sand mine) will operate 6am til 6pm Mon to Fri, 7am til 1pm Sat and hours can be extended from 5am til 10pm, that means quite a lot of trucks travelling across the [district and] Windsor bridge and adding to the current levels of noise and air pollution for a large proportion of the week. With increased heavy vehicle movements, deaths injury and property damage will increase as a consequence, which can be ameliorated by placing the new crossing at the most socially opportune place rather than at the most politically opportune one, the position of which is to the benefit of 'private profits' rather than 'public good'.

Option 1 :- 2009 when the initial proposal for options of the replacement of Windsor bridge was first made available to the public via a visual display in the library or a couple of Saturdays in Riverview shopping centre, my father was ill and passed away, and although I remember some elements of controversy, I had no understanding of the full extent of the project, I also remember after I discovered the plans of the project and the ridiculous traffic solution, I called the RMS who stated the project was really the in the hands of the local council, who were keen on option 1, and when I rang council they claimed it was the RMS's decision. Both claimed it to be the other's responsibility, but council at that time, did prefer option 1, as many water skiers were quite upset their bridge to bridge race could be shortened to make way for a bypass!!!

We were also told that the funding for a bypass was unavailable and this was the best and most cost effective solution.

If the NSW State Government wants to help encourage the development of a large sand resource (as large as Kurnell, possibly larger) out of the Hawkesbury region to help the construction of multiple million dollar building projects around NSW , **it shouldn't be giving the people of the Hawkesbury a cheap and unworkable solution.** Especially given the proposed Allianz Stadium proposals and cost! The RMS traffic modelling for this project that is outdated. Large heavy vehicle movements are already at the predicted RMS levels for 2026, God Help the residents of the Hawkesbury.

The current premier and our local member (Dominic Perrottet) will not communicate with local residents or community groups with their concerns.

These people are meant to be our voted representatives but they have not been willing to listen, and it feels like nothing we could say or do as a community will change their mind.

This decision for option 1 is as wasteful as rebuilding Allianz stadium and nothing but voting these **representatives** out of Govt will send a message, in the meantime their stupidity and short-sightedness may cost Australia one of its most significant heritage precincts.

Heritage artefacts are currently being **bulldozed** every second since the archaeological works started.

The RMS states RMS – states on its Sept community update –

The sand body material will be carefully excavated.

Well, I drove across the Windsor Bridge last week, and I stopped and took phone video footage to document that 2 large bulldozers were working in the archaeological site , tracking around the site ,and at the rate they were working they looked like they were digging for footings rather than artefacts, there was no care taken in their approach and I feel like they are going through the motions rather than actually being careful and respectful of the history.

When I was a resident in Glossodia in 2012, I attempted to contact my local council on numerous occasions regarding the Windsor Bridge Replacement, this is a cut and paste of an email I constructed, to local council, I'm not sure who it was to but it was after I had a conversation with Jeff Organ and his PA, Jo :-

2012

When you check this document out you will see **what little chance as the general public we had to have a say in what options would be best for Windsor.**

1 advertisement in the Gazette and Courier 15th and 16th July

1 display stand in Windsor Riverview 26th July - 140 people *visited* this stand (ropey figures unless you have evidence)

1 community consultation evening on the 1st August - 90 people attended - Who were they?

they then took **140** submissions from interested parties - quote from Jo PA attendant to Jeff Organ at Hawkesbury Council Infrastructure dept said when I asked "how many people live in the hawkesbury district" - "roughly 62,000" and from this many people the RTA consider their survey enough of a community consultation .?

What percentage is that? 140 from 62,000?

I am trying to ask for info about who those 90 people at the meeting on the 1st August were? and what happened at that meeting? for all we know the majority could be councillors.

It does seem a little like the RTA and Council were trying to slip this one past us, while we weren't looking.

My question is "Is there a legal obligation to let us know properly what is going on with options?"

I think this consultation was flawed and proper process didn't occur.

When I spoke with the Heritage people they were against Option 1 on historic grounds. When you look at the RTA report provided you will see that 30% of the surveyed "Community" were most concerned with historical or heritage issues when looking at the development of a new bridge option. Yet when I spoke with Riverstone MP Kevin Connelly yesterday he said he needed convincing that the community didn't want it.

I then constructed a fairly comprehensive letter to the RMS project site which was open for public input, but I couldn't upload as the consultation process for some reason wouldn't let me upload, even though it was as far as I was aware within the consultation period, so I emailed my letter to Roy Surace, but I received no response that my letter was in the mix, so to speak. Here is a copy of that letter, and although some areas of the design have changed, since 2012, many of the issues still remain unaddressed for the residents of the Hawkesbury
----- Forwarded Message -----

Sent: Friday, 15 June 2012 4:32 PM
Subject: Re: Windsor Bridge Website Link

Dear Roy,
I went to submit my opinion and view on the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project and unfortunately the community feedback line is closed.
So here are my views I submit them to you as the community consultation has ceased at 4.31 on Friday the 15th June, 2012.

Dear Sir,
I am writing in relation to the Option 1 proposal put forward in relation to the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project.
I am only recent to the information, I did not receive a leaflet supposedly distributed in 2009, even though I was in the distribution area of Glossodia.
I recently spoke to Roy Surace and received the leaflet that was distributed back in 2009, and I wish to put forward my views against Option 1 for the Windsor Bridge.

I will address some of the points in relation to the objectives of the project.

Firstly I would like to address the objective that this project will minimise traffic queues. When I spoke with Roy the other day regarding the project he out rightly admitted to me that the bridge was not being rebuilt to ease traffic congestion, his view that this bridge was a replacement due to the current bridge being so old (1874). He also mentioned that where the current round-a-bout now sits that a set of traffic lights will be installed, and it would co-ordinate with the other traffic lights around it.

This will be a DISASTER for the windsor afternoon and morning peak-hour traffic. I have been a resident for 10 years and most locals know to avoid Richmond and its afternoon traffic especially on a Friday, but a set of traffic lights at the intersection of George St and Bridge St at Thompson's Square, will cause even more disruption and afternoon chaos and then both avenues across the river will be banked back by traffic congestion.

HOW? Firstly the traffic is already banked back to McGraths Hill every afternoon coming into Windsor, and Macquarie Street is banked back to at least Kable Street.

This is partially school traffic some coming from Arndell, some coming from Windsor high, Bede Polding and also traffic coming from the many private and public primary schools in the area.

Blakes Music is the main private music tuition school in the area.

A set of traffic lights that will allow pedestrians to cross to from one side of George St to the other will be a major problem for traffic congestion and queues.

Blakes music operates between the hours of 3pm to 9pm every afternoon and Saturday from 9-4pm.

There would be about 8 - 10 music teachers who teach students for 30 minutes intervals.

That's 20 pedestrians roughly crossing the road or roughly 10 vehicles to find a parking spot in George Street every 30 minutes during operating hours and depending on whether a parent drops their child off goes out

to do some shopping and then comes back to pick them up, the pedestrian traffic using that crossing would be constant

and this is not including pedestrian traffic from the locals who live on that side of George Street, or the visitors who are residing

in either of the 2 Motels on that side of George St, or visitors to the Blues

festival or Bridge to Bridge and **where does that leave the local vehicle traffic trying to get home across the bridge?**

According to a report carried out by the RMS back in 2009 and tabled at Hawkesbury Council August 2011, table 3.4 stated in a summary of pedestrian results surveyed on the 25th, 26th, 28th and 29th November that pedestrian numbers crossing George and Bridge Street to be 420, 241, 536 and 332

respectively, and over 150 of those crossings were made in the afternoon and on Wednesday and Saturday of these dates afternoon pedestrian crossings were over 300.

Therefore regulated traffic lights would definitely have an influence on traffic flow and congestion across Bridge Street at Thompson Square.

And although you may think the traffic light regulation will aid traffic, in physical reality it will consequently hold up traffic trying to come through that intersection.

Already we have traffic banked back to McGraths Hill or Kable Street, with a round-about that currently flows straight through.

SO IMAGINE how long those queues will escalate when the traffic is constantly stopped to make constant safe passage for pedestrians.

Now also imagine there is a possibility that more trucks may come through the intersection because the speed limit has been raised and the bridge is upgraded.

As a resident of the Hawkesbury I choose the lesser of 2 evils to drive home to Glossodia, choosing often to go via Windsor.

If Option 1 is successful there will be no escape of sitting in traffic for 45mins to get home for what should be a 15minute journey.

Also the traffic noise levels in Thompson Square will be raised due to the road being significantly higher and the constant braking of vehicles stopping for the traffic lights.

Inadvertently **you will create** another North Richmond traffic flow and pollution problem by implementation of Option 1.

What really needs to happen for Windsor is a **proper traffic solution, a bypass** that takes through-traffic out of that already compromised zone.

This will help alleviate traffic congestion for locals, will allow heavy vehicles a proper passage across the river and provide another access point for locals to cross the river in times of flood.

This would meet many of the objectives outlined in the brochure distributed in 2009.

The current project Option 1, does not fulfill many of your own requirements.

It does not provide a long term solution for the Hawkesbury community, as stated by Roy Surace (Project Manager) over the phone to me.

It also **does** impact on the heritage of Thompson's Square, and the "New Look" as per the current visual on your website

Significantly diminishes that old traditional feel which is what I personally identify as Windsor.

The "Square" is framed by the trees on all sides- the new design will look just like a roadside verge or grassy bank.

Aside from this project being against the wishes of the Heritage council of NSW, who have not given this project its

support, Thompson's Square is the oldest Georgian Square in Australia and the third area colonized after Sydney and Parramatta and a very IMPORTANT part of our history.

When I spoke with Roy he also said that in a small sample site where initial digging had taken place aboriginal artefacts had been discovered.

According to Roy the old road out the front of the Macquarie Arms will disappear and this will all be grassed and the big

old silky oak on the corner which has constantly had the Xmas lights in it every year will disappear, plus several other trees along the fenceline.

The old sandstock/brick road out of the front of the Macquarie Arms is a very old important piece of history, and a remaining

example of how the old colonial roads used to look and be constructed.

The Thompson's Square area will be subject to increased noise levels, given that you are also running another road underneath the new bridge to connect the two sides of George Street, that will definitely affect the peace

and air quality of people sitting in that Square for a Sunday afternoon lunch.

It will also increase traffic pressures in the area of Thompson's square.

It really doesn't make sense to push for an option that serves no purpose to improve the conditions for locals and is just

a stop-gap measure that may end up causing more traffic issues that will have to be addressed sooner than later if your

modelling, is incorrect.

I think it is important to go back and look at other solutions and this time to engage the local community a little more. There are many ways this can be done, but this solution is NOT A SOLUTION.

IT IS A WASTE OF YOUR MONEY.

It doesn't address many of your project objectives and doesn't properly service a community of 62,000 residents and if you

re-inforce the current bridge until a proper decision can be made it will serve to give you more time for consideration and come up with a project that has community support and helps fulfil all criteria needed and not rush into this very important infrastructure.

I have included your project objectives from 2009, and have highlighted areas where I think your project doesn't meet your own requirements.

Thank you

Project objectives

The project is to provide a safe and reliable crossing of the Hawkesbury River at Windsor that meets the following objectives:

Objectives Criteria Improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists (highlighted black text = areas where I feel the project will not meet objectives)

- Meets design codes (eg traffic lane widths, shoulder widths and shared path widths).
 - Meets current road speed 60 km/h. Improve traffic and transport efficiency
 - **Minimise queue length/delays.**
 - **Improve performance of road network** (level of service).
 - Enable two heavy vehicles to pass on the bridge without waiting.
 - Improved load capacity to meet current load standards. **Improve flood immunity**
 - Provide for a 1 in 5 year flood event. **Meet community needs for the long term**
 - **Provide efficient connection for local and regional traffic.**
 - Provide pedestrian and cyclist connection to surrounding locations.
 - **Minimise impact on recreational space.**
 - **Minimise impact on noise.**
 - Minimise impacts to businesses and shopping environment.
 - Minimise impact on property access and need for acquisition.
 - **100 year life span for the bridge structure. Minimise impacts on heritage and character of the local area**
 - **Minimise impact on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and conservation areas.**
 - **Minimise visual impact of the bridge and road approaches on the character of local area.**
- Cost effective and an affordable outcome Provide a cost effective solution** in terms of:
- Capital cost.
 - Maintenance cost.
 - Investment on return.?
 - Cost benefit ratio.

Meanwhile , while the community is trying to put forward its view on how this is not a very well considered option for the historic town of Windsor, the 2011 Mayor Bart Bassett is recorded in these council minutes

Council papers 2011 – august 30 – item 189

Item: 189 IS - Windsor Bridge - (95495) Previous Item: MM, Ordinary (8 June 2010) NM1, Ordinary (11 August 2009) MM, Ordinary (28 April 2009)

REPORT: Executive Summary Following community consultation in relation to the nine potential options for the upgrade or replacement of the Windsor Bridge, the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has identified Option 1 as the preferred option, a new high level structure immediately downstream of the existing bridge, connected by a new approach road located on the eastern side of the Thompson Square. The RTA is seeking comment in relation to the preferred option, and it is recommended that Council reaffirm its position in relation to the replacement of the Windsor Bridge, and support the RTA preferred option as Option 1. Consultation

The issues raised in this report concern matters which do not require community consultation under Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Background In June 2008, the NSW Government announced it had committed \$25million for a replacement of Windsor Bridge.

The RTA undertook investigations into potential options of a new or refurbished bridge. Following public exhibition of the nine potential options, the RTA has identified

Option 1, a new high level structure immediately downstream of the existing bridge connected by a new approach road located on the eastern side of Thompson Square, raising the bridge height to accommodate a 1-in-5 year flood event. The existing bridge and road alignment through Thompson Square would be removed providing for a larger area of consolidated open space within Thompson Square. The RTA advises that this option performs best on value for money and performs well in relation to most of the project objectives.

The project could be delivered in two stages based on traffic demands and available funding:

- The section between Wilberforce Road and George Street including construction of a new bridge is estimated at \$31million.

- Future works including traffic signals at the George Street,/Bridge Street intersection and modification of lanes on Fitzroy Bridge (South Creek) are estimated at \$14million, being constructed based on traffic demands and available funding.

The RTA is currently seeking comments on the preferred option, with written comments required by Friday, 9 September 2011.

In consideration of this matter previously, Council at its meeting of 28 April 2009 resolved: "That Council's strong support of the location of the proposed new bridge over the Hawkesbury River at Windsor on the eastern side of Thompsons Square (extension of Bridge Street), at the higher level be confirmed and the RTA be advised accordingly

Further, at its meeting of 11 August 2009 Council resolved to reaffirm its support for Option 1 among the RTA's advertised options for replacement of Windsor Bridge.

It is recommended that Council once again reaffirm its position and support for the RTA's preferred option as the high level Option 1. Conformance to Community Strategic Plan

The proposal is consistent with the Linking the Hawkesbury Directions statement; • Plan for, maintain and renew our physical infrastructure and community services, facilities and communication connections for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses. and is also consistent with (or is a nominated) strategy in the Community Strategic Plan being: •

Lobby State government to improve transport networks.

Financial Implications There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council once again reaffirm its position in relation to the replacement of the Windsor Bridge, and support the Roads and Traffic Authority's preferred option as Option 1 (high level). ATTACHMENTS: AT - 1 Windsor Bridge over the Hawkesbury River Options Report – dated August 2011 - (to be distributed under separate cover).

If you note, these council papers are dated August 30, 2011, the RTA was seeking comments/submissions to be in by 9th September, 10 days later. Not much time to inform the community of an opportunity to make a comment or submission, How were we supposed to know? Not everyone attends the council meetings.

The initial push for the replacement for Windsor Bridge was it was structurally unsound and old and needed much maintenance, yet many of these arguments make no sense, if it was that old and dangerous why have the previous local councils allowed a greater increase to the traffic flow. Former RMS Bridge engineers have currently rated the bridges' condition as safe and for around \$15 million it could be refurbished to serve another 50 – 100yrs especially if it's mainly servicing local traffic. Reasons for the bridge replacement constantly change from traffic flow, to structural condition, to maintenance costs, to flood mitigation, the only constant in the argument is that the bridge must be replaced.

There is something unusual about the fever with which the RMS and the liberal party are pushing this solution as opposed to commonsense, and the rate at which the RMS contractors are currently pursuing their objectives on site regardless of heritage or anything else of importance.

I imagine if they destroy and cover up as many heritage items as possible they'll be able to push through their short-sighted wasteful solution, specific moments of their destruction of artefacts have been recorded by the CAWB people, many of who are locals and business owners.

I moved out of the Hawkesbury, partially because of the traffic and the rail-timetable which saw my husband spending close to 4 hours per day to get to work and return home. I still have many friends and business and personal interests in the Hawkesbury so I can't not travel there unfortunately, but I feel for the town, and it deserves a bypass.

I would urge everyone on the inquiry to take a trip to Windsor on Friday afternoon at 4.30pm and to enter Windsor via Windsor Rd, McGraths Hill, you will instantly see the traffic chaos, and then to revisit again on a weekday morning around 7.30 – 8pm (not school holidays which display different traffic figures) and stand in Thompson Square, overlooking the bridge, and when you come, do it

unannounced, do not inform the RMS or the Liberal party of your intention, so they can't change the phasing of the lights so that they miraculously ease the flow. Come talk to the locals and see for yourself what problems there will be.

This enquiry is about the last chance for historical Windsor. I urge all members of the enquiry to help the people of the Hawkesbury gain a **proper traffic solution** given what is in store with the sand mining and the fact the new replacement bridge will be at capacity almost as soon as it opens. I also thank you for enquiring into the process,