

**Submission
No 134**

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Mr Edward & Mrs Helen Sobiesiak

Date received: 24 January 2018

24th January 2018

To the parliamentary committee on Windsor Bridge replacement project

Helen and Ed Sobiesiak

To Whom it May Concern

As residents of the Hawkesbury, we wish to raise our concerns about the Windsor Bridge replacement project. There are two key issues, firstly, traffic solutions, secondly, loss of heritage.

The proposed replacement bridge does not adequately address the traffic congestion, which causes frustration on a daily basis, especially to residents on the north side of the Hawkesbury River, such as ourselves. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of trucks and double B's using the roads through Windsor and across the Windsor Bridge. This added traffic results in delays and increased travel time for the residents. Given the high volume of traffic flowing through Windsor, it would seem far more prudent to build a bypass around Windsor, instead of replacing an historic bridge with another bridge in almost the identical location. By retaining the current Windsor Bridge and building a new bridge enabling through traffic to bypass Windsor, would be a much more long term and satisfactory solution to the traffic congestion. It is noted that bypasses in towns such as Berry and Kiama have greatly reduced the traffic congestion and have helped to maintain the unique identity of the towns.

The second key issue about the Windsor Bridge replacement project is its destruction of the heritage of Thompsons Square and surroundings, including both Aboriginal and early European. The construction of the proposed Windsor Bridge would destroy historic Windsor Bridge, along with any relics of the ancient Indigenous occupation of this area. Also, examples of early European settlement, such as the brick barrel drains that were built in 1814, will be lost forever. Surely, it makes more sense to retain the history, the story of Windsor and in fact realise the enormous tourism potential that such a unique heritage offers. Therefore, to protect the heritage of Windsor, a bridge that bypasses this historic precinct is the solution, rather than a bridge that would plough straight through this fragile historic area.

Furthermore, Thompsons Square is an important meeting place for locals and visitors. On any day of the week, people gather in the park to enjoy food and friendship, which helps build community. The Windsor Bridge replacement project would reduce significantly this social space and inflict high volumes of traffic, noise and air pollution. The character and charm of Thompsons Square would be sadly compromised. It seems reckless and very short sighted for a Government not to listen to the residents, such as ourselves, who have first hand experience of the issues involved. Very simply, the Windsor Bridge replacement project is NOT a satisfactory solution to the traffic and heritage concerns. Only by building a bypass, which leaves the current historic Windsor Bridge in place and creates another bridge crossing will there be a long term solution to the traffic congestion and heritage issues of Windsor.

Sincerely,
Helen Sobiesiak
Ed Sobiesiak.