

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

Name: Mr Joseph Portelli

Date received: 24 January 2018

The Director,
Portfolio Committee No. 5,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
Sydney NSW 2000.

Dear Director,

Re: Inquiry into the Windsor Bridge replacement project

BACKGROUND

I am writing this letter out of concern for a place that I have liked the ambience of since when I first saw it, when soon after my wife and I moved into the area; a place we still regular visit to relax in at the end of the week. To cut to the chase I object to the current proposal from the RMS to replace the existing Windsor bridge over the Hawkesbury river as it does not significantly benefit anything, degrades the look-and-feel of the place and diminishes the historical relevance of Thompson Square and its surrounds.

ISSUES

The following are the issues as I see them.

Traffic flow improvement. Currently, during peak hour, the traffic queue for traffic heading into Windsor and over the bridge starts at around where Bunnings McGraths Hill is. The bottlenecks include the junction of Windsor Road and Pitt Town road, the changing from 2 lanes to 1 lane in McGrath's Flats (just after the junction of Windsor Road and Pitt Town Road) and the traffic lights at the junction of Windsor and Macquarie roads. Basically the current road system into Windsor was not designed to handle arterial traffic (Windsor was officially founded and planned in 1810). Changing one item in the road system won't fix the traffic flow problem. To properly fix the traffic problem all the bottlenecks in the path have to be resolved or an alternative path investigated.

Flood Proofing. Currently, during high rainfall events, the area around the South Creek bridge is flooding before the current Windsor Bridge goes under (blocking traffic through McGrath's Flats along Windsor Road). Also there are areas along Wilberforce road (Putty road) just south of Wilberforce (around where Buttsworth Creek bridge is) which also floods during high rainfall events. So having one bridge less flood prone will not flood proof the Windsor Road – Putty Road stage in the road system.

Degradation of historical the historical merit of Thompson Square and its environs. Thompson square is the birthplace of the "fair-go" ideology – a quintessential Australian characteristic. This came about when governor Macquarie named the square after an ex-convict rather than someone from the royal family. This was unheard of at the time and governor Macquarie paid for this by losing his post as governor. Building a concrete monster in an area with has I don't know how many state heritage listed buildings around it is historical vandalism!

Visual Impact. Thompson square, on Saturdays and Sundays and during holiday periods in particular, is a meeting place and entertainment venue for locals and visitors to Windsor. My wife and I are regulars to the area. The look-and-feel of the place is one reason for it being popular. And,

as above, building a concrete monster in the area is not going to improve its look-and-feel.

Impact on local businesses. Degrading the look-and-feel around Thompson square and diminishing its historic merit will, most likely, diminish the visitors to the area impacting local businesses.

CONCLUSION

The current RMS proposal to replace the current Windsor bridge over the Hawkesbury offers insignificant advantages over the current state in terms of improving traffic flow in the 'Windsor road system' and insignificant advantages over the current state in terms of flood mitigation. It also degrades the area historically and visually which in turn will potentially impact local businesses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Going by the above facts (poor and negative returns on investment) and the fact well over 70% of traffic flowing over the Windsor bridge is through traffic (not terminating at Windsor) I recommend that:

- All work on **Option 1** (Windsor bridge replacement project) immediately cease. This includes the alleged "Archeological Salvage" operation currently being conducted.
- A real solution to traffic problems and flood risks be pursued; one that CANNOT involve flowing arterial traffic through a town which was formally founded in 1810 and never designed to handle modern day arterial traffic.

Yours Sincerely
Joseph F. Portelli

Wednesday, 24th January 2018