

**Submission
No 158**

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

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The Windsor Bridge replacement project proposed by the State Government and RMS is without merit and unacceptable. As a regular tourist to the Hawkesbury area I find the proposal deeply disturbing.

1. The replacement bridge will be inadequate both for present and anticipated needs of road traffic through Windsor, across the Hawkesbury River and the surrounding network. An additional crossing, not a like-for-like replacement bridge, is what the government should be providing.
2. The destruction of the current bridge would violate the intent of NSW environmental law to protect and preserve historical transport infrastructure.
3. The construction of the southern approach would destroy high value archaeological remains, both colonial and indigenous, and seriously compromise other heritage assets associated with Thompson Square, which includes some of the earliest buildings and structures of the colonial era. This includes the remains of the Francis Greenway wharf and the Macquarie-era brick barrel drains recently uncovered, the legendary "Smuggler's Tunnels" of Hawkesbury folklore.
4. The proposed bridge does not meet the 1 in 5 flood immunity level required as a condition of project approval. The new bridge will increase the flood risk for several hundred homes upstream due to changes in river flow, and provide "just under 1 in 3" flood protection.
5. The level of community opposition and the availability of alternative routes indicates that the impact of the project on the broad community has not been properly assessed. I fully support the endeavour of these dedicated community members to protect the heritage of their town.
6. The proposed bridge design is against the RMS' own guidelines and does not meet the objective of minimising visual impact to the heritage vistas of the area.
7. The detrimental effect of this project on the development of heritage tourism in the Hawkesbury has largely been ignored. The increasing value of tourism to the region and its potential growth into the future has been identified as a source of employment and economic growth which will be placed at great risk.
8. The economic analysis provided for this project is incomplete and does not allow a comparison with the other options. The variations between the early analysis and that reported in the EIS raises serious concerns about the completeness, accuracy and reliability of the reported figures.
9. Forcing a heavy vehicle route through the middle of public open space is contrary to sensible design principles. Heavy vehicle and through traffic should be diverted via a bypass to enable the continued enjoyment of the open space for public use.

All of the issues mentioned above have been amply researched and investigated by concerned experts with high standing in their various fields. Their negative findings in relation to the bridge destruction plan are virtually unanimous.

The selection of Option 1 by the RMS directly contradicts findings and recommendations of its own departmental officers. The project should be halted immediately.

Windsor deserves a bypass.