

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Mrs Nina Butler

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Partially
Confidential

To:
Portfolio Committee No.5 – Industry and Transport
Inquiry Into The Windsor Bridge Replacement Project
Submitted by:
Nina Butler

Introduction

I have lived in the Hawkesbury, first at Wilberforce and now at East Kurrajong, since 1980.

I have driven through Thompson Square and across the Bridge twice a day, 6 days a week, for about 30 years.

I had no idea of the history or the meaning of this place because I was time poor working full time as well as raising a family.

When the RMS first presented its Options for a new crossing of the Hawkesbury I voted for the Option which was a by-pass near Wilberforce. When it became obvious that the RMS had chosen Option 1, I, along with my husband, attended every Public Forum run by the RMS in regard to this Project, with the exception of Meeting 1 and the last one which the RMS cancelled due to increased opposition to the Project by all participants at the meetings.

It was from these Public Forums that the participants, who had become increasingly aware of failings within the RMS Project and driven by a strong desire to protect the Heritage Precinct of Thompson Square and the town of Windsor, formed a community action group known as CAWB (Community Action for Windsor Bridge).

Eventually CAWB formed a 24/7 Occupation of the Square, to protect it, to disseminate information about the RMS Project to the public and to collect individually signed protest letters to the Premier. I and my husband participated in the Occupation by manning several 4 hour shifts in the CAWB High Commission, as it became known.

After doing many shifts I began to realise that I knew little other than the basic historic facts about the Square such as its foundation date and it being the oldest public square in Australia. I thought that if you want someone to feel empathy for something and want to save it for posterity, then they have to know about it. I knew nothing of the building's stories or the stories of the people who had made them and lived in them on the three sides of the Square that consisted of built environment, or of the River and its stories of boats and people.

So, making use of what research we had learned from doing our own Family History Research, my husband and I began researching the individual buildings and the lives of those people who had made them and lived in them.

From this research came "The Stories of the Square" (see CAWB FB Page) and the rich collection of stories that unfolded, many often told for the first time. It provided a unique chronological, deeply moving, intensely and historically interesting saga of the only remaining Georgian Square (1795) in our country.

When we came to contribute to the Historical Response to the EIS we found that the Square in its early years of Andrew Thompson and Lachlan Macquarie had laid the foundations for one of our Nation's most important legacies – that of The Fair Go.

In 1811 Lachlan Macquarie and his wife Elizabeth made a journey to Green Hills. When there they held a special ceremony, to honour Andrew Thompson, in what was then known as Bell Post Square (a tall post erected in the Square held aloft a bell which called the convicts to work and back, hailed the arrival of River boats and sounded alarms).

Thompson had died in 1810 of a lung disease re-activated after he spent three days in flood waters rescuing about 100 settlers from their rooftops. He was one of our first heroes.

Macquarie named Thompson as the Father of Windsor and proceeded to re-name Bell Post Square as

Thompson Square – after a convict. This was unheard of and caused anger amongst many of the Exclusionist free settlers. Normally roads and public places were either named for the Governor or the King or notable individuals. Hence, true to the Macquarie's belief in William Wilberforce's Enlightenment ideas, the notion of our Nation's Fair Go was first officially recognised in this tiny, unassuming patch of earth on the edge of the known world.

The recognition of this idea was a light bulb moment for us.

This public square that we had driven through for 30 years held within its humble beginnings, one of the greatest sagas of our Nation.

So over about a year and a half we had come from a state of ignorance to one of overwhelming knowledge about Thompson Square.

The importance of this place for our Nation is huge.

I therefore wish to submit that the Windsor Bridge replacement project as proposed by the RMS and the LNP State Government is without merit and is unacceptable on many grounds.

HERITAGE

* The construction of a huge, modern, elevated bridge straight through Thompson Square, will effectively de-value, degrade and destroy the heritage precinct of Thompson Square (1795) which is the oldest and only surviving Georgian Public Square left on the continent of Australia.

“This is going to be bad for heritage....no doubt about it...” Kirk, Barrister for the Government, Day 2 Court Transcript. Pg. 53

* The construction of the new bridge will divide the Heritage Precinct both visually and physically. This would greatly detract from Macquarie's vision of this as a Public Square which would run down to the river, forming one side of the Square. Macquarie wished to create such a square in Sydney but had been prevented from doing so. Thompson Square was his special creation and a bedrock idea for the Nation he envisioned would one day be Australia.

“Working Paper 1 says impacts are so major WBRP should not go ahead. RMS's heritage consultants in Working Paper 1 state the proposed impacts on Thompson Square Conservation Area are so major the WBRP should not go ahead. But RMS has chosen not to accept this advice because they had already chosen to explore ONLY OPTION 1 in this EIS.” Windsor Bridge Replacement Project Independent Heritage Review August 2013, pg 8.

If the new bridge continues it will cut the important sight lines from one side of the Square to the other. The curtilages of the historic houses lining Bridge Street will be cut so short the visual space of this whole section of houses will be greatly compromised. Due to the continuous noise of the constant trucks the windows of the historic houses will be removed and replaced with un-historic and unsympathetic additional glazing to try to shut out the noise of the B-Doubles rumbling past barely metres away and at window or above height, due to the elevated nature of the bridge.

Due to the constant tremors created by the B-Doubles the fragility of the stone and brick historic house will weaken them as they were not built with this form of traffic in mind.

* Thompson Square provides a special insight into our convict past as it illustrates effectively the intent of Lachlan Macquarie to treat convicts who had served their time as equals in the manner taught by Macquarie's friend and mentor, William Wilberforce. On one corner of Bridge and George Street stands a memorial to Philip Cunningham, an Irish convict, who was part of the Vinegar Hill uprising. He was hung in 1804 at the site of this memorial. Cunningham represents pre-Macquarie convict times.

The memorial will now become the site of a one part of a set of lights which the RMS intends installing at what is now a round-about at this intersection.

* Here, in the far flung reaches of the known world, the ideas of emancipation were being played out in the tiny 3rd settlement of the Colony, Windsor, in a small square known then as Bell Post Square. In naming the Square for the successful convict and hero of Windsor, Andrew Thompson, Macquarie officially recognised the idea of the Fair Go – an idea that has run through our Nation from that time to

this.

The Square is still much as has been since the construction of its prominent buildings and in particular the Macquarie Arms Inn built by Macquarie in 1815, the Doctor's House built in the 1840s, Armstrong's House built 1860 and Doctor Dowe's House also 1860, the Arts Building and The Moses House, 1830 as well as many other fine old buildings.

Indeed Macquarie would still "know" it today.

* The construction of the huge concrete pylons which will embed deep into the bedrock of Thompson Square will destroy unique archaeology belonging both to the early days of the Colony (1794 onwards) and Aboriginal cultures going back 40,000 years.

Already the RMS has uncovered in its "Salvage Archaeology" the remains of the very first Public Works ever carried out in Australia – the man sized barrel vaulted brick drains ordered to built by Lachlan Macquarie in 1814. These wonderful convict constructions are in mint condition and it is imperative they are preserved in situ The RMS by its own policy will "document and then destroy" this unique part of the heritage precinct of Thompson Square.

At the River's edge are the unique remains of the first wharf designed by Francis Greenway. These historic remains will be destroyed by the construction of the new bridge. These wharves form part of a triad of building works carried out in Windsor by Greenway – the Windsor Courthouse, reputed by many to be one of the most complete and finest examples of his works, and St Matthews, Anglican, one of the finest of the Early Colony's Churches.

"If the WBRP were to be approved DP&I would approve the excavation of a potential archaeological site of State significance and possibly of National Heritage significance. This would be against the advice of the NSW Heritage Council and their specialists and the consultants who wrote working paper 1".

Windsor Bridge Replacement Project Independent Heritage Review August 2013. Pg 38.

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS AND SUPPORTERS OF CAWB'S FIGHT TO SAVE THOMPSON SQUARE

When the RMS decided to implement its WBRP with its only preferred Option 1, many renowned institutions and eminently qualified individuals have come forward, standing beside CAWB to officially offer support for the preservation and protection of Thompson Square and oppose Option 1 :-

* RMS's OWN HERITAGE ADVISORS : "the only appropriate treatment of Thompson Square and Windsor Bridge is to avoid any further negative impact and to take the opportunity identified by the Heritage Council to remove through traffic."

* NSW GOVERNMENT DEPT OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE – HERITAGE REVIEW : Working Paper 1 says – "the proposed impacts on Thompson Square Conservation Area are so MAJOR, WBRP should not go ahead.

But the RMS has chosen not to accept this advice because they had already chosen to explore ONLY Option 1 in their EIS and pressured them to revise it.

Sam Haddad D.G. of the Department statedkey concerns raised in the submission...include heritage, traffic and the impact on the Thompson Square Conservation Area. The assessment acknowledges that, despite there being no destruction of heritage items apart from the existing bridge, the new bridge would have long-term negative impacts on Thompson Square in terms of fabric and character." IMPORTANT – this was written before the unearthing of the convict brick barrel vaulted drainage system.

NSW Government DEPT – INDEPENDENT ENGINEER REVIEW : They stated about the WBRP...."that the State Significant Infrastructure application be refused for reasons relating to heritage, impact,urban design, visual impact, insufficient information and public interest."

* DAVID SHOEBRIDGE, GREENS : “Windsor Bridge – Hidden documents reveal political interference in planning process – Dec 2013....Despite final reports from heritage, traffic and engineering consultants not supporting the Project, Dept of Planning produces a draft report recommending approval AFTER pressure from backbenchers. The Member for Londonderry, BART BASSETT, also sent his own email to the Dept of Planning pressuring them to approve the Project (email contained within the Upper House call for Papers).

WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT – INDEPENDENT HERITAGE REVIEW

Aug 2013 Dr Mary Casey, archaeologist and heritage consultant, B.A. (Hon), MBEnv, PhD. Director, Casey and Lowe, Archaeology and Heritage, produced a report that is highly critical of the RMS's EIS in many areas. The report states that the RMS's heritage assessment is inadequate and insufficient in its recognition that the State Heritage Register Listing for the Square includes the OPEN SPACE and ALL the BUILDINGS THAT SURROUND IT.

The report states “the planned Urban Design” impacts are not mitigating impacts on heritage BUT are ADDITIONAL IMPACT.

HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL

The new Hawkesbury Council voted on 25/10/16 to rescind support for Option 1 and support the preservation and restoration of Thompson Square as a cornerstone of the District's Tourism program and as a National Icon. It seeks to retain the Historic Bridge, an integral part of Thompson Square for local traffic.

All Councillors now support a third crossing of the Hawkesbury in the form of a by-pass for Windsor which would form part of a holistic traffic plan for the Hawkesbury. This would mitigate the District's traffic crisis and allow for strategic growth and development.

RMS OWN DOCUMENTATION

It statedOption 1 will not alleviate traffic situation (in the long term) and indeed was NEVER planned to do so. It, according to the RMS is devised simply as a “like for like” replacement bridge. A term used by State Liberal MP Kevin Connolly.

NSW HERITAGE COUNCIL

It is unequivocally opposed to the project called WBRP “for the irrevocable damage it will do to Windsor and Thompson Square.”

The Heritage Council reinforced its preference for a by-pass option. It argues the project should be refused on heritage grounds.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT on April 14 2014 CAWB was awarded by the Liberal STATE GOVERNMENT of NSW, as decided by the Heritage Council, the STATE HERITAGE AWARD for ADVOCACY for HERITAGE by a community group. CAWB was praised for protecting heritage and revitalising Windsor and Hawkesbury as a heritage destination.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC SOCIETY

Has stated”Thompson Square is a vital part of the attraction of Windsor for Regional, Interstate and International tourists, and the intervention of a high level motorway will significantly reduce the appeal of the area to visitors and therefore have a severe negative impact on the local economy.

NATIONAL TRUST

“It opposes the demolition of the State significant Windsor Bridge and encourages its conservation for light local vehicle/pedestrian traffic only and that a new bridge and road infrastructure be constructed as a by-pass to Windsor township to satisfy long term traffic movement and improve flood free access

across the river.”

IT SHOULD BE NOTED :

On May 13 2015 at the 21st National Heritage Trust Awards CAWB was recognised and awarded the prize for Heritage Community Advocacy.... By the Federal Liberal Government. IT SHOULD BE NOTED that in both instances of CAWB receiving Heritage Advocacy awards, the Liberal Ministers responsible for presenting the awards suddenly had other tasks to do at that particular time – even in the middle of the ceremony!

RMS BRIDGE ENGINEERS

In January 2013, senior RMS Chief Bridge Engineers, Brian Pearson and Ray Wedgwood, who had been in charge between them (1981-2000) of the RMS's development of the State's bridges – eg the Anzac Bridge – “totally oppose Option 1 as a politically driven “folly”. At the time of 2013 they sat on the RMS committee.

SCOTTISH BORDERS FAMILY HISTORIC SOCIETY – Ronald Morrison editor.

This Scottish Historic Society includes within its field of operation, the town of Yetholm, where Andrew Thompson was born in 1773. It stated”Thompson is one of the famous sons of the Borders country. The Scottish Borders Family History Society lends CAWB its support in its endeavours to protect and preserve Thompson Square.”

HAWKESBURY HISTORIC SOCIETY

Has sent a letter of support for the preservation of Thompson Square and a rejection of the RMS's WBRP, known as Option 1.

THE WINDSOR BUSINESS GROUP

Is supportive of CAWB in it's fight to save Thompson Square.

HAWKESBURY BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

Another local group supportive of CAWB in it's efforts to save Thompson Square.

NRDCAA

North Richmond and Districts Community Action Association draws its members from Richmond, Nth Richmond, and surrounding areas. This group has been a long standing supporter of saving Thompson Square.

RICHMOND MAINSTREET INC – Supportive of CAWB

HAWKESBURY GAZETTE – Local area newspaper editorial has come out strongly for a BY-Pass solution to the Windsor Bridge proposal.

HAWKESBURY RATEPAYERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION – Supportive of CAWB.

KURRAJONG FORUM – Supportive of CAWB.

HAWKESBURY ENVIRONMENT NETWORK – Supportive of CAWB.

FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIANA PIONEER VILLAGE – Supportive of CAWB.

ELIZABETH FARRELLY PHD (ARCH) ARCHITECTURAL CRITIC AND COLUMNIST SMH –

Condemned the proposed plans of the RMS for Thompson Square.

CLIVE LUCAS OBE President of the National Trust of Australia, Prominent Heritage Architect – is supportive of CAWB's fight to save Thompson Square and has attended the Square to make supportive speeches condemning the RMS's Option 1 plan and advocating for a By-Pass.

PROFESSOR IAN BARKLEY-JACK Prominent Hawkesbury Historian is a supporter of CAWB and has appeared at CAWB rallies to give speeches.

GRAHAM EDDS Prominent heritage/conservation consultants – B. Arch (Hon), MBEnv (Building Conservation), Member National trust of Australia (NSW) – He stated"Australia needs to realise Thompson Square isn't just the green bit in the middle. It is the only remaining civic square in Australia from the 18th Century."

CAROL EDDS Heritage Consultant B. Building (Hon) , MBEnv (Building Conservation), Member (chair) National Trust Australia (NSW) Hawkesbury Branch – is supportive to save the Square.

KATE GRENFELL Prominent author of significant Australian historic novels, in particular "The Secret River", has stated "Losing so much of our past is a National tragedy....the character of the Square needs to be preserved as one of the few tangible reminders of how ordinary settlers lived and worked in the early years of the Colony."

JACK MUNDEY Officer of the Order of Australia (2000) for service to the identification and preservation of significant sections of Australia's natural and urban heritage through initiating Green Bans and through Historic Houses Trust, Master of the Environment Award – Sydney University (2001). Jack joined the movement to save Thompson Square (2012) and has made several journeys to rallies in the Square and give speeches. Jack Munday is Patron of CAWB,

CELEBRITIES/ARTISTS who are supportive:-

John Williamson
Peter Fitzsimmons
Ben Quilty
Jane Bennett
Michael Caton
'Angry' Anderson
Shannon Noll
Randall Waller
Wendy Harmer

POLITICIANS and POLITICAL PARTIES

Bill SHORTEN – has pledged to Nationally List the Square

Susan TEMPLEMAN – Federal Member for Macquarie has been a strong and long time advocate for the Square and the historic bridge even taking part in a recent demonstration to indicate the level of her support. Ms Templeman seeks to prevail upon the State Government to find an alternative By-Pass route around Windsor, thus creating a most needed 3rd crossing of the River. The solution would serve the district well into the future and would preserve the much loved and respected heritage of the area. Ms

Templeman has also obtained from her own Party that, if they should gain power in the next election, they will give the Square National Listing thus protecting it from any State or Federal Government interference in the future. Ms Templeman has also prevailed upon the present Environment Minister, Josh Frydenberg, to give emergency National Listing to the Square to protect it NOW. So far, he has done nothing.

THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, both State and Federal, are supportive of preserving and protecting the Square.

THE GREENS PARTY is also supportive of protecting and preserving the Square.

HAWKESBURY COUNCIL has rejected the RMS WBrp and wants to preserve the Square in its historic entirety for the future of the Hawkesbury. It is at present undertaking a Conservation Management Plan of the Square for its restoration, enhancement and raising it up as a centre point of tourism in the area. SUPPORT FOR THE WBrp remains only now in two bodies – the NSW State LNP Government and the RMS. The previous Hawkesbury Council, which was dominated by Liberal members, 2004-2016, was in favour of the Project and indeed under the Mayorship of Bart Bassett it was pushed as being a necessary step to take because of the unsafe state of the historic bridge. This has proven to be a misleading statement put to Councillors to gain their support through fear. As has been proven by the RMS itself, the historic bridge is in no danger of collapse because the RMS has removed all load restrictions on it.

WINDSOR BRIDGE

*The destruction of the current historic bridge built 1874 would violate the intent of NSW Environmental Law to protect and preserve historical transport infrastructure.

*The historic bridge is structurally sound as is attested by two renowned retired RMS bridge construction engineers.

“The bridge has not exhibited any signs that it is about to fail.” Report on structural condition of the existing Windsor Bridge. Pg 4.

“It appears the optimum option is some combination between the RMS and the Pearson Wedgwood options which will be able to provide a viable option for the next 25-50 years and hence not build a new bridge at this stage. Then, at some time in the future, a By-Pass can be built which avoids all the damage to property, heritage values etc. So with a relatively modest expenditure the Bridge can be serviceable for the next 50 years within which time an alternative route will have been identified and agreed.” Report on Structural Condition of the existing Windsor Bridge, pg. 31.

*Windsor Bridge is the first bridge constructed across the Hawkesbury, receiving a heightened deck in the 1920s where reinforced concrete was used for the first time. It is an engineering first.

* It would be sensible to retain the historic Windsor Bridge for light local traffic and as a third crossing if a by-pass bridge is built at another more suitable and less controversial and less destructive location.

* With the retention of the old

bridge, it may be possible to, at times, close the Historic Bridge for events to be held on the Bridge itself, such as occasional special market days for Xmas, special lighting for the marking of times like Xmas, or even fireworks for celebrations.

HERITAGE POTENTIAL

Heritage is an important part of Windsor's tourism economy. As a tent ambassador, we have taken signatures from our immediate area, Sydney, the Blue Mountains, all states in Australia and many from overseas. If Thompson Square is preserved and is granted National Listing, its tourism factor could be

greatly increased, especially as the Hawkesbury now has a Council that recognises this and has come out strongly in opposition the Option 1.

Tourism is a major attraction for the Hawkesbury and if handled correctly the economic potential for the region is great.

All in all, CAWB has collected about 40,000 signatures of protest to the Premier. These visitors to the Hawkesbury and to Thompson Square are a constant almost imperceptible flow yet they overwhelm the numbers of visitors who may attend a one day event like the Bridge to Bridge annual race hosted by the Power Boat Club.

In 2016, CAWB undertook an analysis of 10,000 signed and addressed individual letters to the Premier, feely given in Thompson's Square. This covers a continual period of a bit over a year. These addresses were then plotted across the State, Nation and the World to track patterns and levels of wider concern. (copies retained).

They constitute a large sample (about 25%) that can be extrapolated across the 40,000 expressions on concern committed to paper by citizens to this point giving the figures below:

*35,000 came from all over NSW. This was to be expected. Nearly every township in the State is represented.

*1052 from other countries diverse as Norway to Chile and China to Spain demonstrating the international tourist potential of Thompson Square.

*2968 from other States of Australia. All States and Territories are represented again showing the importance of the place as an iconic place in the Australian psyche.

CONCLUSION

This shows in real terms the National significance of the area not by abstract economic debate but by the citizens themselves regardless of where they live. No clearer demonstration of how important the place is than the thousands of people who came to the spot (CAWB Tent, Thompson Square) and sought to express their concern. About ¼ claimed some familial connection to the place and history in the past. A standard question asked is "Why would they denigrate in anyway the very place we travelled so far to see?"

Thompson Square has many possibilities for functions etc due to its heritage values. The Hawkesbury could hold a "Fair Go Day" with functions centred in and around the Square itself extending to Greenway's buildings, the historic buildings of the Square and into the town of Windsor itself. On Australia Day, those taking naturalisation could do so in a marquee in the Square – the birthplace of the Fair Go which gave Andrew Thompson and other convicts freed by Macquarie a fair start in return for honest work.

Historic buildings in Windsor at the moment are marked with a brass plaque saying "Item of Heritage Interest". As a result of CAWB's extensive research, stories of much greater interest could adorn the buildings and the story of the Square itself could be written on a large placard on a post in the Square, much in the style of Georgian signs i.e. white writing on a black background as indeed would have been the original sign post ordered by Macquarie.

TRAFFIC

The replacement bridge would be inadequate both to present and to anticipated needs of traffic through Windsor, using the bridge through Thompson Square, to cross the river. * There are, at present, about 2,500/3,000 trucks (B-Doubles are prominent) crossing the bridge every day. By 2020 we are told, when the Penrith Lakes sand mining has finished and the sand mining in the Upper Colo are under full swing, the crossing can expect up to 5000 trucks a day and all our local traffic which is steadily increasing due to housing estates occurring on the Western side of the river. These numbers are already much greater than those proposed by the RMS which predicted the new bridge would be "maxed out" by 2026 – but already, by 2017, the traffic has increased beyond these predictions for 2026.

"Over the 2012-2017 five year period, while light vehicle movements on Windsor Bridge only increased

by 7%, total heavy vehicle movements increased by 48%. Rigid trucks had a 45% increase, while articulated trucks had a 59% increase.” CAWB traffic count 2017.

* A by-pass as proposed by the RMS as one of many 9 Options put to the Hawkesbury in 2009, would be the best solution for Windsor, saving the Nation’s rare and unique heritage and providing a safe, efficient and functional alternative to what the RMS told the residents, was “the cheapest option....and if we didn’t agree to that then we would get nothing.” But it appears “nothing” was not an acceptable option.

“Rather than constructing a three-lane (ultimate) bridge which has more traffic capacity than the roads and intersections feeding it, we would suggest considering alternative bridge crossing locations which may provide adequate traffic capacity for a longer period of time (e.g. a BY-PASS OPTION)” Cambray Consulting pg 24.

The three lanes of the new bridge are intended, as said by Dominic Perrottet, will run as two lanes East and one lane West. This solution fails to understand that just as much traffic returns in the afternoon as leaves in the morning, thus failing to solve the traffic glut of afternoon traffic.

* Many other small towns with less population and less traffic are given by-passes as government policy. Tenterfield, Pop. 6,600 approx. will get a by-pass. Berry with 17,000 trucks has a new by-pass. Ballina has a new by-pass which had to avoid Cabbage Tree Island because of Aboriginal cultural concerns. Bega, Macksville, Coffs Harbour, Coolac, Holbrook, Karuah, Moree, Newcastle, Tarcutta, Woomargama, Alstonville, Albury Wodonga Hume Freeway, Coopernook.

* From the pages of the RMS itself, when dealing with the By-Pass at Tarcutta, they (The RMS) state that the benefits of removing traffic congestion are the reduction of noise, vibrations and fumes and that it makes the town more attractive to visitors.

Windsor needs a By-Pass – it is the only solution to fix the traffic and preserve the Heritage Precinct of Thompson Square.

*All the above issues have been thoroughly investigated by all relevant highly qualified and respected experts in their fields of engineering, history, heritage, traffic flow etc., town planning (even the RMS heritage advice and the NSW Planning Office).

* They have all formed negative opinions in relation to The Windsor Bridge replacement project. * Neither the NSW Government nor the RMS have come forth with any case that justifies or explains this Project and its accompanying destruction of Windsor Bridge and Thompson Square over a traffic bypass which was one of several options proposed by the RMS.

* Option 1 directly contradicts the RMS’s own findings and recommendations of its own departmental offices.

THE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES OF THE RMS

As I have been a part of the Community who has been involved in this procedure since attending the RMS Community Forums, I have some knowledge of how the RMS has gone about imposing this project on the Hawkesbury and its people. The Community Forums were held in the Hawkesbury Function Rooms, Windsor in the evenings.

I will list some of the things that I remember as unusual ways for a Government Department to go about its business of involving the community. * When some members of the Community Forum began asking questions about why the RMS chose Option 1 we were given, among other reasons, the following:- From the 9 Options originally offered to the Community to consider for their preferred Option, the RMS stated that they added together the votes for Option 1 and Option 2 and as Option 1 had received the most votes the RMS said it used that data to decide on Option 1 as the preferred Option.

As there were only 134 votes taken overall for all of the Options, we were left to wonder why they had not added together the votes for other options to come up with something other than Option 1. We were also told they had in their possession a Petition in favour of Option 1 signed by about 500 – 600 people. We were left to wonder why this same number of people had not voted for this Option but had

signed a Petition. The RMS never showed us this Petition, but it was suspected that the only place that could have secured such a number of votes so quickly would be from the residents of The Peninsular, concerned that one of the RMS Options was to go along a road on The Peninsular, and members of The Windsor Power Boat Club, who opposed any structure which crossed the River on the course of their annual Bridge to Bridge Race.

* The RMS has always been actively seeking public approval for this Project but its methods of doing so are questionable.

In May 2012 the RMS held what they called "The Deliberate Forum" on the 30/05/2012 in Windsor. They hired a company – GA Research/AFS Smart Askers/KGA – to hold this "Forum." It was advertised to randomly selected citizens of the Hawkesbury as a function which was designed to canvas their opinions about how to improve the Hawkesbury and what things the district needed to help it improve. A free dinner was provided and participants were paid about \$200 each – business owners received more than home owners.

At first, as the function began, attendees were asked about suggestions for improving the Hawkesbury – then someone brought up the question of the new bridge at Thompson Square. Then members of the RMS media group appeared with all their presentation equipment to give a comprehensive visual and spoken spiel for Option 1. At the conclusion of the event, as attendees were leaving, they were asked to give their approval of the Project by signing a document. About half did. Most of these were negative. * Supporters of Option 1 have often been involved in using their position e.g. Local Councillor, to push the project

* On the 13th November, 2017 a number of involved action groups held a protest at the RMS dig site in Bridge Street, Windsor. At the time of the protest it was noted by participants that the traffic was very heavy. Advice was given to on air radio stations, the ABC's Morning Show with Wendy Harmer being one, that traffic on the Wilberforce Road and the Windsor Bridge was heavy because there was a protest on the bridge. This information was given by the RMS. However, there were NO protesters on the Bridge, no march on the bridge – and well the RMS knew this as they were there at the site of the dig, watching all that proceeded.

However, it was suggested the traffic lights that control the right hand turn into Macquarie after the roundabout in Thompson Square, had been slightly altered to allow a limited amount of time for traffic to turn into Macquarie from Bridge Street, reducing the number of cars able to turn into Macquarie Street at a given light change. This action caused a build up of traffic into the roundabout, partially blocking it and therefore causing a resulting bank up of traffic right along the road to Wilberforce. Any block in the Square will cause this bank up of traffic to rapidly happen particularly if the traffic is heavy as it normally is on week days.

As a result of this misinformation being relayed by the RMS to radio stations, the protesters received a lot of vindictive responses from the local public, thinking it was the protesters who had caused the traffic jam.

On the 23rd January, 2018, the same community action groups held a peaceful rally at the same place. The same thing occurred with the traffic and it is believed the same set of traffic lights were once again changed.

The RMS has remained secretive about its finds at the dig and will not allow the public to view even the important convict drains or Windsor's Smugglers Tunnels, before they demolish them.

POSSIBLE REFORMS OF THE RMS

Due to extensive manipulation of facts and misrepresentation to the public of this particular Project it may be an appropriate time to look at the procedures of the RMS and consider some review of its procedures.

* The RMS lacks transparency. It seems to act as a law unto itself and does not divulge information which one would consider necessary when undertaking a project such as the WBRP, which all major

Heritage bodies are against. The RMS has never divulged why it must build this bridge which is already proven to be inadequate for the increased traffic needs of Windsor and which will destroy National treasures. One would think you would need a matter of National security to make this a priority over the planning and building of a by-pass which would solve all problems.

The local Government Member, Dominic Perrottet has refused to release the Working Papers for this project.

*The RMS perhaps needs a new Code of Practice which would emphasis truthfulness, accountability, integrity, ethics, chain of command and scrutiny by an uncompromised and unaffiliated body which has the power to override the RMS should sound objections be brought against projects proposed by the RMS.