

**Submission  
No 167**

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT  
PROJECT**

**Name:** Mr John Tibben

**Date received:** 26 January 2018

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

Dear Director,

### Re: Inquiry into the Windsor Bridge replacement project

Please accept this correspondence as a submission to the Windsor Bridge Inquiry. In making this submission I wish to register my opposition and objections to the Government's current proposal to build a new bridge only 35 m downstream of the existing, historic Windsor Bridge.

Firstly I would like mention a little of my background.

I came from Netherlands to Australia with family at age 4 in year 1954.

I am an Australian citizen (since 1963) but as an immigrant who has returned to and lived in my birth land for a period (Like a large percentage of Australians) I have background experience that comes from having history and family heritage in a land a long way from Australia. I have never resided in the Hawkesbury although I have lived in nearby LGAs for most of the time since 1968. So it is I have no direct personal interest in Windsor but do recognise its National critically important role in the early years of British settlement of Australia.

There are various reasons why I object to this project in its current form. These reasons include that in my opinion it represents poor value for money, in that it does little or nothing, (as confirmed in the Project EIS), to mitigate flood impacts and will have no more than an **incremental improvement** on existing, chaotic traffic conditions.

But to my mind **the greatest problem**, as acknowledged by Government experts, the project will have catastrophic and irreversible impacts on the Heritage significance, tourism potential and public amenity of old Windsor and in particular the oldest Town Square in Australia.

It is disappointing to note that, despite **tens of thousands signatures** testifying to both expert and community opposition to this project, the New South Wales Government has continued with this plan which will continue to permanently force all North/South through traffic (including huge numbers of heavy transport vehicles) through the North eastern end of Old Windsor (including Thompson Square) severely interrupting movement of local residents and also folks visiting Windsor whether it be to use retail urban space, for recreational purposes or to visit places of interest which may include, Hawkesbury Regional Museum and Hawkesbury Regional Gallery and to visit the oldest town square in Australia or other.

As an Australian citizen I am deeply offended and discouraged by the government actions/inaction on this project. There has been no obvious effort to respond in any meaningful way to anyone or any group who has raised legitimate questions or made comment on many concerns related to the proposed Windsor Bridge replacement project and its effect on the remaining historical features of this the third oldest town in Australia. (as evidenced in other submissions)

Also presented with this submission are several other letters I have written to various department heads and leaders. (Please see documents)

- Dear Prime Minister,
- Dear State Premier,
- Dear Minister for Environment and Energy
- response\_2017-10-25-13-54
- Ref.00410168 CAWB\_JT Response to Mr McSweeney.

I received acknowledgement of receipt for each one, but received **only one** reply on behalf of all. The reply (also included) casts doubts on the durability of the current bridge but without explanation why a bridge about to fall down does not have any load or traffic limits or warning signs like "Cross an Own Risk". Till this time my response to Mr McSweeney questioning his response remains unanswered. Also I have written to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight but I failed to retain copy as evidence. As with others only response was an acknowledgement of receipt.

Also attached see document

- Windsor on the Hawkesbury is where Progress First Started. (Words copied from social media written by another concerned citizen as further example of public concern at mistreatment of Australian history)

There have been voices crying out for years asking to be heard on the need to step back and not just see this as a bridge replacement project but as a perfect time to put in place a plan that would allow Windsor to become a living historical town, a place for the world to come see and learn about European settlement of Australia and how it overran the existing Indigenous population of the region but also where the notion of "*A fair go for all*" began. While much of the physical structural history has already been damaged or destroyed it is not too late to save a lot of truly historically important structures. More of these structures are now being revealed as brick drains and tunnels are being uncovered by the archaeological dig now in progress in Thompson Square. Their existence is no longer modern fantasy or hearsay, but clear that these items already uncovered are true example of public infrastructure perhaps 200 years old. It would be a **National Disgrace** to simply photograph and catalogue and then bulldoze away to place a new bridge. (that will not address current, let alone future traffic needs).

Since the prospect of replacement bridge rather than second crossing with bypass has been pushed by government RTA/RMS there has been introduced into the local business community a fear that by putting in a major through traffic bypass will lead to stagnation and ultimate death of Windsor's commercial area because traffic will no longer stop to avail themselves of local services. So there is now a section of the local community that is reluctant to stand up for the protection of Heritage in fear of indirectly killing the town. Some even express belief that a new bridge will improve things for Windsor but this is not borne out by traffic studies and projections. I understand that it cannot be guaranteed before the fact exactly what the final impact of a bypass would be on business in the town. There have been numerous studies done in Australia and other nations on the effect of arterial roads bypassing country towns. The general findings clearly show that if there are declines in trade they are usually short term but in cases where constructive plans were put in place before bypasses opened, many towns with some sort of special attraction actually flourished once major through traffic was removed from the towns

*(please see attached reports on the topic of bypassed towns....*

- **ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF TOWN BYPASSES** 2011 by NSW Transport Roads and Maritime
- **SUMMARY OF HIGHWAY BYPASS STUDIES** by Dennis Leong, Wisconsin Deptment of Transportation and Glen Weisbrod, Economic Development Research Group from USA.

Also for interest a report by ABC RN about how country towns survive highway bypasses. To view please copy and paste link into your internet browser...

While this is not a detailed study in anecdotal way it clearly shows that town bypasses are not death penalties for the bypassed towns.

[file:///H:/CAWB/By%20Passes/How%20country%20towns%20survive%20highway%20bypasses%20-%20Bush%20Telegraph%20-%20ABC%20Radio%20National%20\(Australian%20Broadcasting%20Corporation\).html](file:///H:/CAWB/By%20Passes/How%20country%20towns%20survive%20highway%20bypasses%20-%20Bush%20Telegraph%20-%20ABC%20Radio%20National%20(Australian%20Broadcasting%20Corporation).html)

While it cannot be guaranteed either way (Positive or Negative) how a bypass would ultimately affect Windsor, based on the attached and numerous other studies done I expect that as Windsor has such a direct part in early Australian settlement and effect on the National Identity it would be possible to create such a significant historical identity for Windsor that it would flourish as a prime tourist destination not only for Australians but also **International visitors**. Windsor will flourish and the only questions that will be asked would be why did it not happen sooner?

When engaged on the topic many "Australians" have told me *"If you want to see real history you have to go to Europe and see 500 year old castles and walled cities etc."..... WTF.* Almost like Australians don't realise we have our own history and that if we do not preserve it now it will never get to be 500 or a thousand years old, especially when you live amongst it and mistake every change as progress.

In relation to Windsor's historical appeal I can add that over the years I have shown numerous international guests around Sydney and Environs. Always I got positive and very interested reactions to Windsor and it's history as the place where modern Australian notion of a fair go has its roots and the fact that it was the food bowl of young

Sydney..... With planning and support Windsor could be developed as Heritage Tourist location that will be a must see for anyone interested in European settlement around the world.

In conclusion, this is a project that as it currently stands will fail to deliver a quality outcome for Windsor; whether in respect to real improvement in traffic flow now, let alone the expected traffic flows just a few years into the future. Also the current project fails completely to acknowledge and protect the true historical value of the whole of old Windsor and in particular Thompson Square. I will not go further into other contentions relating to project expenditure, the performance of the RMS, or the effectiveness of the department's strategic planning. To save this area is more important than to win an argument on whether politics or public servants have let Australia down. With Heritage protected and retained Windsor can work to reap the benefits for long after this debate is history. This must be resolved with extreme urgency so Windsor can move on.

My major concerns are based purely on absolute need to retain and protect true history, not just in photographs and geological reports, not just in books, not just in Museums or just on www.com. Windsor needs to be saved as a real life place where people can walk and see true example of our past. It is critical to our National Identity to retain real things to show us where we as a nation have come from.....

Without history how will our descendants ever understand whether they are making progress or where they are heading?

What can be done??

Given the project's obvious shortcomings, I would like to see the current project should be put on hold immediately pending a full and open investigation into alternatives that will deliver better outcome for Windsor and all future Australians. The Project should then be reconceived in a form in which better addresses the traffic and historical needs of Windsor in which Thompson Square is preserved in a historic state, the historic Windsor Bridge (itself a masterpiece of construction from its time) could be renovated for local traffic, and a new bridge constructed on a Windsor bypass located in new location that will facilitate free movement of through traffic (particularly heavy transport vehicles) by not passing through town but with access roads to allow passing traffic easy entry into Windsor for anyone wanting or needing to do so

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Yours sincerely,  
John Tibben,