

**Submission  
No 168**

## **INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

**Name:** Mr Colin Hawkins

**Date received:** 26 January 2018

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I am writing to lodge my objection to the Windsor Bridge replacement project.

By way of background, I am a 6th generation resident of the Hawkesbury. I was born in Windsor 66 years ago and have lived in the area all my life. I believe this qualifies me to comment on what I see as the unique characteristics of the Hawkesbury and the threats presented by the current bridge replacement proposal.

My main objection is that the heritage value of Thompson's Square and the existing bridge will be destroyed if this project goes ahead as planned. Thompson's Square is a unique link to the country's colonial past, being the oldest town square in the nation, established by Governor Lachlan Macquarie.

Our heritage is what defines us as individuals, as communities and as nations. It allows us to understand where we have come from, in order to appreciate where we are now, and what we want to preserve for future generations. The protection of rare heritage sites (such as Thompson's Square) is critical for any civilised society. This concept is well recognised in the UK, Europe and other parts of the world, where heritage sites are respected and preserved.

It is therefore incongruous and unpalatable in my view to place a modern, concrete elevated bridge structure (with associated high volume traffic) through the middle of a recognised and valued heritage precinct. It is also impossible to do so without destroying the heritage value of that precinct. This is not just my opinion, it is also the view of the Heritage Council, the National Trust and the independent Heritage consultants engaged by the RMS and the Government, all of whom have advised against proceeding with the current proposal. I am mystified as to why the RMS continues to ignore this professional advice and has the gall to be suggesting that the project will be sympathetic to the heritage of Thompson's Square. It will destroy it !!

The recent discovery of the convict built brick barrel drains during the archaeological works should be sufficient in itself to stop the project and to force the government to look to other locations. This would be the case if such an important discovery occurred elsewhere, so why cannot the same apply to Windsor and Thompson's Square ?

I also have concerns over the proposed 1:4 gradient of the lower portion of the Square, as outlined in the Landscape plan. This will make the area too steep for use by the community and tourists, who are currently attracted to the existing grassed area for picnics and other family activities. Such activity will not be possible on a 1:4 slope and will effectively render the space unusable by the public. This gradient will also prevent access to and use of the area by people in wheelchairs or with other forms of disability. This will place the RMS and the Government in breach of disability access guidelines and relevant legislation.

I hope these views will be taken into account in the Inquiry's assessment of the feedback and conclude, as everyone else has, that the logical solution would be to leave the existing bridge and Square intact and build a bypass. That would preserve our heritage and divert high volume traffic around the Town.

Yours sincerely  
Colin Hawkins