

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Mr Keith Holmes

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I am making this submission to address the terms of reference for the Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Industry and Transport, specifically that the committee inquire into and report on the expenditure, performance and effectiveness of the Roads & Maritime Services' Windsor Bridge replacement project, and in particular:

- a) the current Windsor Bridge, including its maintenance regime, renovation methods and justification for demolition,
- b) the replacement bridge project, including:
 - i. options presented to the community
 - ii. post construction strategic outcomes, including traffic benefits, transport and network service capacity
 - iii. economic, social and heritage impacts
 - iv. flood immunity benefits
 - v. project assessment process
 - vi. planning and procurement strategies and associated project costs
 - vii. cost benefit analysis process, and
- c) any other related matters.

As a recent visitor to the Hawkesbury region I was astounded to see the lack of respect paid to the heritage assets of the area, particularly the proposal to demolish the oldest crossing of the Hawkesbury River in favour of a new bridge totally out of keeping with its surrounds. I consider the Option 1 project should not go ahead as it does not meet the project objectives which were part of the criteria for its selection.

1. It fails to provide for a 1 in 5 year flood event,
2. It fails to deliver the required objectives regarding traffic and transport efficiency,
3. It does not meet community needs for the long term,
4. It has not adequately or appropriately addressed the costs and benefits,
5. It does not minimise impacts on heritage and the character of the local area,
6. It is opposed by the community at large due to its detrimental effects, and
7. Better alternatives have been identified and not properly or fully investigated.

I believe Windsor deserves to have its heritage assets protected and that a third crossing, a bypass, is the most appropriate course of action for the long-term future traffic and flooding needs of the region. The exact location of the new crossing should be determined in conjunction with government plans for the Outer Sydney Orbital to ensure the most effective transport solution is provided.

This project is not supported by the Hawkesbury City Council, is vehemently opposed by Community Action for Windsor Bridge (an organisation which has held a vigil in opposition for almost 5 years), was highly criticised by the Heritage Council and National Trust, and lacks the apparent support of any registered body other than the RMS and the Liberal Party. The people of the Hawkesbury spoke at the last local government elections and overwhelmingly supported those who opposed the Option 1 project. The last Federal election they also chose a representative who stood up for the preservation of the heritage of the area.

The NSW Government would do well to heed the message they are ignoring and move to stop the project and proceed with a bypass for a long term solution. If they fail in this respect they will undoubtedly lose their stranglehold on the safe seat they have enjoyed for so long.

In the UK we value our heritage. We do not destroy it.