

**Submission
No 182**

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

Name: Mrs Gail Reynolds

Date received: 27 January 2018

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 letter as a submission to the Windsor Bridge Inquiry. I wish to register my objection to this project primarily on the grounds that the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project will have irreversible negative impacts on the State Heritage listed Precinct of Thompson Square with no appreciable traffic benefits.

The RMS plan to build a new and modern concrete structure through the oldest remaining public square in Australia will do nothing to alleviate the massive traffic congestion seen morning and afternoon and the increased number of trucks travelling through the Square, it will only destroy this significant and irreplaceable link to our colonial past.

The proposed new bridge will not improve traffic flow as the congestion is caused by the bottleneck intersection at Macquarie Street and the inadequacy of one bridge to accommodate all the traffic needing to cross the river. When asked at a community forum what the RMS plans were for the Macquarie Street intersection we were told it was outside the scope of the project. How can the RMS say this project will improve traffic when they intentionally ignore a key piece of the Windsor road network?

One of the RMS arguments against building a by-pass for Windsor is that "Traffic volumes are too low to warrant a bypass" (RMS website).

The RMS stated in the EIS(2012) that there were 19,000 vehicle movements across Windsor bridge daily and 1,300 of those were heavy vehicles. The latest traffic count (CAWB 2017 traffic survey) shows the number of daily traffic movements now to be 23,000 with the number of heavy vehicles already risen to over 3,000. That is an increase of over 100% in truck movements.

The town of Moree received a by-pass when heavy traffic movements were only at 1,600 a day. Why is Windsor not due the same treatment at 23,000 vehicle movements a day and 3,000 of those being heavy vehicles?

In regards to heritage impact of the project and as a resident of Thompson Square I am disgusted at the RMS for not only refusing to consider building a by-pass for Windsor but continuing to ignore all the advise of institutions such as the Heritage Council of New South Wales who stated in their submission to the EIS.

"There has been inadequate recognition that the State Heritage Register listing for the Square includes the open space and all of the buildings which surround it."

" The placement of a new major road along the side of Thompson Square will sever the relationship between the buildings along Bridge Street to the Square, and also with the buildings on the opposite side of the Square."

The RMS and state politicians continually refer to the green space within the Square as "the square" totally ignoring the surrounding buildings and the importance of the history of commerce and community interaction within this space for more than 200years, not to mention their total disregard for the rich Aboriginal history of this area.

Essential to the historical significance of Thompson Square Conversation Area are these buildings surrounding the civic space, which the RMS stated in the EIS will be significantly and adversely effected by the construction process, but also the colonial and indigenous archaeology. Archaeological “salvage” conducted by the RMS will reduce the historical significance of this archaeology and of the whole Conservation Area. Disturbing and removing archaeology is not preservation!

This project will also have adverse social and economic impacts as the Square is still an important gathering place for today’s community. On weekends and evenings you will see many people picnicking in the park, patronising local business and enjoying the beautiful and historic surroundings and the views to the river and farmlands beyond. Today these views & vistas are vital in creating a connection with our surroundings, the river and farmlands, that define the character of the Hawkesbury.

The modern higher and larger approach road and bridge will block these sight lines, severing this link to the town's origins and the passing traffic with associated noise and fumes will make sitting in the park like sitting next to the M2!

The historical significance of Thompson Square to the whole of Australia can not be overstated. It is as important to the history of colonial Australia as Port Arthur.

This civic space was a bustling area of colonial activity with government administrators, soldiers, convicts, farmers and free settlers engaging in daily life since 1795, years before Port Arthur was established.

In 1811 in an unprecedented move Governor Macquarie named the square “Thompson Square” after an emancipated convict, Andrew Thompson, and in so doing signalled to the colony that anyone could rise in this society.

This is the foundation for that cherished Australian concept of “A Fair Go”.

This historic precinct should be held in the same high regard as Port Arthur, treasured and given our highest level of protection, not be destroyed by large modern monstrosity.

Thompson Square deserves more, our community deserves more!

This ill-conceived plan to bulldoze a modern high level bridge through Thompson Square needs to be stopped immediately.

The NSW government and RMS should spend our money on a long term solution to the traffic problems in the Hawkesbury. Re-furbish the existing Windsor bridge for light and local traffic and build a by-pass for Windsor thereby providing a third bridge over the Hawkesbury river and at the same time protecting Thompson Square.

Thank you for accepting and reading my submission to the inquiry. I have been only able to lightly touch on the aspects of economic, social and heritage impacts of this project and the traffic outcomes. There are many more issues regarding the Windsor Bridge replacement project which I hope committee is able to investigate.

Yours sincerely

Gail Reynolds

