

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

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To:

Portfolio Committee No.5 – Industry And Transport

Submitted by: Trish Hermens on 28/01/2018

Background: Please accept this as my submission to the Windsor Bridge Inquiry. I have followed the situation at Thompson Square/Windsor Bridge closely for the past couple of years. I hope to keep my submission short and not too detailed. To this end, I would like to say that I am opposed to Option 1. Instead, I support the views of CAWB, Hawkesbury Wobblers, the NSW Heritage Council, Engineers Australia, the 200,000 plus members of Australia's heritage and historical associations, local heritage experts, the Government's own traffic, engineering and heritage experts, over 40,000 community members, the local Council and over 10,000 members of the CAWB Facebook page. All of whom have spoken against the project for various reasons and who support a by-pass.

I am a 65 year old 5<sup>th</sup> generation Hawkesbury resident who has lived here all my life. I know the area exceedingly well. We live in a quiet beautiful semi-rural area. We value the peace and quiet and heritage highly, but like many others need to get to work out of the area in our case Parramatta. I would never support Option 1. Why - because:

1. I do not think it appropriate to bulldoze a large concrete arterial high-level bridge and road through Thompson Square. It is an important heritage area and frankly one of the only heritage areas left intact in Windsor. Progress in the 1960-70 damaged or removed much of the heritage nature of Windsor's shopping precinct. Our heritage and the amenity of the square needs to be preserved. The noise and visual impact alone will be horrendous. In addition, the 1 in 4 slope planned for the upgrade to most of the park will make it unusable. I believe it will destroy financial viability. Thompson Square is valued by locals and tourists alike it should be improved and promoted not destroyed. The brick barrel drains "smugglers tunnels" and the remnants of the original wharf should be retained. The RMS are currently destroying/removing the archaeology on site describing it as "salvage".
2. Option 1 which requires traffic to take the same route will not cope with the current traffic problems let alone what the RMS predicts in future. Why because it does not remove the bottleneck. Traffic currently bottlenecks well before you reach Windsor on either side but particularly the Sydney side. This is due to the inadequacy of the current road network that funnels all traffic through the top of Windsor and to cross the bridge. Since 2012 there has been a 100% increase in heavy vehicles through the Square with up to 3,000 vehicles traveling through each day. It is bedlam now.
3. Option 1 will not help in a flood. I have lived through every flood since 1953 and my parents and grandparents before me. In big floods, like 1961 and 1964 water covered all but the tip of the roofs of both two-story buildings on the other side of the bridge. That is Bridgeview and the Macquarie Picnic Ground building. The water along Wilberforce and Freemans Reach Roads which are located on a flood plain was up to the cross bars on the telegraph/power poles. Photos exist that evidence that. I have some of them if they are required as evidence. Initially there was confusion, as some people believed that they would have flood free access. The old bridge goes under in a 1:2. The proposed bridge height is less than a 1:3. A new bridge in itself will not provide flood free access no matter what height it is because the roads on the Freemans Reach Wilberforce side will be

under water. It is likely that as now any new bridge for safety sake will be closed on the Thomson Square side of Windsor.

I attended the community consultation sessions held by the RMS in July 2009 to discuss the yet undecided Option only to find out that the preferred option (Option 1) was decided prior to this in 2008. How is that fair?

My preference would have been Option 6 that creates a mini by-pass of Windsor. It does not destroy heritage and is close enough for locals and tourists to easily exit to Windsor so supports tourism/business. It significantly reduces the length of the bottleneck so trucks and people like me from across the river including Kurrajong, North Richmond, Wilberforce and Freemans Reach can travel more efficiently and safely via Windsor Road towards the city.

Given the project's obvious shortcomings - that is it will not improve current or future traffic flow, it will destroy the heritage/amenity of Thompson Square, it cannot not provide flood free access or improve safety during flood events. Windsor Bridge replacement project is a poorly conceived and executed plan. No effort has been made to genuinely explain why such a destructive plan is better than building a town bypass – which is standard practice in similar locations across the rest of the New South Wales. I would like to see the project stopped; the historic Windsor Bridge renovated and remain. There is evidence that it is safe and should remain. Put the money towards a by-pass. Like multiple other country towns - we deserve it.

Trish Hermens (Bowd)