

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 28 January 2018

Partially
Confidential

SUBMISSION TO THE UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY
INTO THE WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT

28th January 2018

**IN SUPPORT - OF THE NEW WINDSOR
REPLACEMENT BRIDGE**

BACKGROUND

I am a long term resident and constituent of the Hawkesbury

I use Windsor as my principal place for food/household supplies, services i.e. bank, medical etc., also socially, and cross this bridge regularly, as I have done for a great many years. I feel I am entitled to an opinion or point of view on aspects and issues raised regarding the Replacement Bridge for Windsor access, Just like anyone else in my position that actually use the bridge in their day to day living, and in my mind, irrelevant of how long you have lived here. If it affects you, you have a right to a voice and a say.

I have worked my entire adult life across the Hawkesbury region.

MY REASONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW WINDSOR REPLACEMENT BRIDGE

ROADS, TRAFFIC & RIVER CROSSINGS

I believe the current proposal will not "fix" Hawkesbury's traffic issues, but it was never intended to fix Hawkesbury's traffic issue. But I also believe when the bigger issue of Nth Richmond is addressed with an extra crossing, Windsor's Traffic issues will cease or be rather minable compared to now.

The obvious long term solution to the existing Hawkesbury traffic issues, would be to provide extra River crossings, all agree regarding extra crossings being needed. North Richmond or Yarramundi to the West and Ebenezer to the East.

- The current Windsor Bridge I believe to be narrow and unsafe, It is extremely dangerous passing oncoming traffic and all that use this bridge know it. It is not just the trucks that have difficulty crossing this narrow bridge. I have watch both public buses, and school buses, try to cross this bridge in the same manner as trucks. I myself have had very close calls with 4WD's or cars towing horse-floats, Boats, Car trailers, caravans, motor-homes etc. I 100% support the replacement of this unsafe bridge.
- I do not support the idea of a bypass, or the bypassing of the Windsor township. I feel bypassing Windsor would only further contribute to the towns decline.
- If people want to protest for extra river crossings that would deal with "Hawkesbury's" traffic and flood plain issues, great, there needed, we all agree. But Not by holding the Hawkesbury Community to ransom with our new bridge, a replacement bridge at Windsor, "FOR" access to Windsor, not to bypass Windsor, that we all want and wanted ! And Not by pitting community member against community member for self serving individuals and/or for political motives and agendas being the next State & Federal Elections.
- This project I feel does deliver on what it was intended to do. A Replacement bridge "FOR" Windsor Access. I do believe that the new bridge's design with 3 lanes, and the north side round-about, plus the traffic lights working in sink, will greatly assist with the current traffic flow, of which should be a lot smoother.
- A Highway - Singleton Rd, HWY 69, aka the Putty Rd, has always gone through Thompson Square at the top end of Windsor township. For protester to state a super HWY is going through town to accommodate truck movements up the Putty Road, I

feel this is a gross exaggeration. In order to achieve that, the entire Putty Road to Singleton would have to be upgraded, and I don't see that ever happening.

- Truck movements and the Putty Road have decrease dramatically with the M1 and Pacific HWY upgrades. Many insurance companies will not insure truck companies that use the Putty Road. It has been this way for many years now.
- Congestion through Windsor has increased significantly over the last few years to the point where queues of up to three kilometres long during peak times are not uncommon.
- We all know what the traffic delays are, of which is actually being caused by traffic issues at the Nth Richmond bridge. Those attempting to avoid Nth Richmond, overflow to the Windsor Bridge via Freemans Reach Road which is causing Windsor's problems. Nth Richmond is a far bigger problem, desperately needing to be addressed. Every Hawkesbury Local Knows this.
- The reason Traffic banks up on the Putty Rd, is that Putty Rd users are polite enough to allow a car for a car entering off Freemans Reach Road. None of us have to do that, but we do because we understand the issues over at Nth Richmond.
- Windsor needs its replacement bridge, Hawkesbury ALSO needs "Extra" River crossings, western and eastern sides of the Hawkesbury Region.
- It should be noted that the same protester members of CAWB and associated Groups, such as; The Hawkesbury Wobblers, DAG (direct action group), HEN (Hawkesbury Environmental Network), Hawkesbury Greens, Heritage Act, Windsor Bridge Destruction etc. they are pretty much the same people, they are all connected. Locally we all know this. The people protesting use traffic and a bypass as one of their reasons for protesting, but these are in fact, the same people and protesters that protested against the Red Bank Development at Nth Richmond which included a seconded crossing at Yarramundi on the western side of the Hawkesbury, of which would have addressed and fixed the traffic issues at Nth Richmond bridge. Also a share funded bridge by the developer with the State Government. So I have to ask myself as a local, are these protesters for real about dealing with our traffic issues ? Are they for real about extra river crossings (bypass) ? Or is this just a protest for no other reason than for self serving individuals politically grandstanding, attacking the current State Government, with nothing more than the next State and Federal elections in mind, all at the expense of the Hawkesbury people. Would these same people be protesting at the very bypass they ask for, or extra river crossings. The Hawkesbury Wobblers (a Greens & Labor protest group), are now about to create a protest tent at Richmond targeting State Rail. The sager continues, different location, different day, different cause, serial protesters.
- The RMS state that 7,373,000 vehicles cross the bridge annually. There are approximately 68,500 residents in the Hawkesbury Region, if 10,000 of those residents lived on the North Western side and crossed the bridge 13 times a week (twice to and from work for 5 days, also 1 day on the weekend), $13 \times 52 \text{ weeks} \times 10,000 \text{ residents} = 6,760,000$ many of the vehicles crossing I would say are local Hawkesbury Residents, they just don't live in Windsor. I personally can cross this bridge up to 26 times in a week. Work, goods & services, social and function attendance related. Many south side businesses servicing private and business clients on the north side can also cross a few times in one day, every day of the

working week.

- The RMS states that 70% of the traffic which uses Windsor Bridge is through traffic. Through traffic yes, but still local Hawkesbury Residents, going about their lives and getting to and from work, and given Windsor's current state, there is a very high probability that work is not in Windsor. Windsor has already been bypassed by a Mall of which has killed Windsor, and since the tent and the protester, a great many local Hawkesbury Residents avoid Windsor, especially Thompson Square where the tent is. I do contribute to the through traffic, but I also am one of the 30% of which uses Windsor's businesses and services. I use to always eat at Thompson Square, I have not meet family and friends and eaten there in 2 years, because of the tent protesters.

FLOODING

- Being an old Local, flooding and being flooded in is not a huge concern for me. Most old locals know that what goes up must go down, so your trapped for a few days, or a week or two, so what. That's how it has always been across the entire Hawkesbury Region for all of my life. Some of our fondest memories are of flood times. If you prepare you home and property well, you'll live, and you will be fine.
- What matters more to people such as myself that can be trapped for weeks, is the ability to access town for bulk supplied, and depending on mother nature, that may need to be done hastily. Flood wise, I deal with my own valley creek flooding, the Colo River flooding and the Hawkesbury River flooding, with 4 further creek bridges between the Colo Bridge and Windsor Bridge. If you have lived here long enough, you know when to prepare for being trapped for extended periods by flood waters. Sometimes though, waters can rise very fast, especially if heavy rains are falling over different catchment areas. My own valley can go from a dry creek to a metre over gates overnight.
- For me to drive to Windsor is half an hour each way, that's 1 hour of drive time alone. The last time the Colo flooded, it rose 14 metres in 12 hours. Over a metre an hour. Getting in food and supplied is time limited and in mother nature's hands.
- In more recent years they have been closing the Windsor Bridge well before the water has even gotten close to the deck of the bridge. This tells me that there are in fact concerns for the safety and integrity of the bridge, as they have never done this before in my entire life. This also now limits me greatly in flood times with getting in much needed supplies.
- The raising of the new Windsor Bridge by 3 - 4 metres is a blessing for me. It gives me much greater opportunity to access Windsor. It increases the opportunity for me and people on the North side of Windsor to get to town for those greatly needed supplies prior to the Flood Plain roads of Wilberforce and Freemans Reach Rd's going under water, and being trapped and isolated in my case for up to 2 weeks. I would have been equally happy with an extra 1 or 2 metre opportunity, 3 to 4 metres, fantastic. Thank you.

HERITAGE

I do not believe that the new Replacement bridge will ruin Windsor's History or its historical Square.

- No Buildings are being demolished.
- There seems to be concerns regarding future traffic vibration affecting the integrity of buildings. The buildings at Thompson Square have stood the test of time. Trucks on the Putty

road prior to the M1 and Pacific HWY upgrade was none stop, big semi's, as it was the main arterial road North to Singleton and the New England HWY. The Army who built the Putty Road always convoyed from Holsworthy Base to Singleton Base. I loved to watch the Army Convoys head north, I loved watching the Tanks go up the Putty road, I grew up watching this regularly. These buildings have withstood the many years of Army & Tank convoys rattling and thundering right past them. If anything was going to impact on these buildings, that sure would of. The Army and big semi's now use the M1 and Pacific HWY. I see not much changing traffic wise from the current situation, and don't see this as a concern.

- No Heritage in my mind is being destroyed.
- The Bridge access roads over the years have cut through Thompson Square park with various different directions. Historical images show this to be true.
- In my mind there is no specific shape to the Thompson Square park as depicted though out the past. I think the park's new shape as part of the Replacement Bridge Project, is more user friendly. The Section of Park between Old Bridge St and the Putty Rd is very rarely, if ever used, and this has been the case for my entire lifetime. I don't see the removal of this section of the park for the new bridge project, as significant.
- Old Bridge St, has always been used as a bridge access in the past or access to the Windsor wharf, there has always been a road where the new bridge alignment is being built.
- I also don't see how the History of the Square is impacted at all. The History of the square is more significant in what transpired and/or took place at this particular location. This is something within History itself, of which can never be changed or destroyed.
- We all in the Hawkesbury know that Thompson Square is only "ONE END" of Windsor. A heart of a town is its Centre - I do not dispute that Thompson Square is the "Historic" heart of Windsor, it indeed is, however, the statements being used by protesters, simply referring to Thompson Square as the "heart" of Windsor.... of which it is NOT, only one END of Windsor. History and historical buildings are dotted all over the entire Hawkesbury region. No history or buildings are being demolished or destroyed in Windsor. CAWB and associated groups have been spreading propaganda, half truths and straight out lies in order to gain support and build a political platform.
- The archaeological dig and the unearthing of the "drum barrel drains". No one has ever cared before about buried history in that location, otherwise it would not have been left buried for all these years. It is only via the New Bridge Project that we have been given this very rare opportunity of an archaeological dig including "Salvage Works" as defined by the Oxford dictionary - 1.n. Rescue of property from loss, property so saved, payment made or due to its rescue; saving & utilization of materials. (SAVE) - Artifacts found, documentation and photography of "buried" infrastructures would better serve from a historical and education perspective in the museum, and/or the Pioneer Village if portions are to be salvaged. All can then see and learn Historical aspects of Colonial infrastructures along with the complete Colonial story.
- I personally would not be interested in walking or viewing exposed sewers. As a local resident I'm more concerned about the health and diseases that we may currently be exposed to. We all know the diseases and hygiene levels from colonial times, these were the sewers to the river. My view, learn, document, salvage what we can, and get it buried again ASAP.

INDIGINIOUS HISTORY

- I have watch every protest speech at Thompson Square start with; "I'd like to pay respects to the Darug People, Deerrubbin and the elders past and present, etc". This has personally

angered me. I find this being said at this particular location, the birth place of colonisation, extremely offensive to our indigenous Australians, and if I find that offensive as a white Australian regarding our indigenous people, how do you think this would make our Indigenous Australians feel ?

- Correlating our indigenous people with Thompson Square's colonial history is extremely offence, as it would be for many of our indigenous peoples. 30 thousand years of indigenous culture and history wiped out by colonisation, death, murder, enslavement and brutality. Let's not change history, there was no joy in colonisation for our Australian indigenous peoples, especially in Windsor and surrounds. I'm sure our indigenous peoples might like nothing more than the birth place of colonisation wiped off the face of the earth.
- I have personally spoken with a few of our local indigenous people, also a Darug elder and also one of the committee members of the Darug custodians, where it was stated to me by them; "The Darug People choose their fights, and the Windsor Bridge protest is not one of them." I think this statement is very clear in its meaning.
- I was also told by an indigenous women, that she was contacted by Peter Reynolds, head of CAWB, creator of the associated groups, owner of 10 Old Bridge St, and Hawkesbury city Councillor, when the first archeological dig was starting. Peter Reynold's stated on the phone that she should get down there, that they were about to destroy the indigenous and colonial history. This lady went down to the sight with 3 other indigenous people. Peter Reynold's then told them that he wanted to chain them to the gate or the tree for media attention. The 4 indigenous people were absolutely mortified by what Peter Reynolds wanted to do and refused to be chained to anything. This women then went and spoke to the men on the bridge worksite, and also spoke with the head archeologist that was onsite, where she found out that consultation had actually already taken place with the Darug Custodians, and that they were already involved concerning the archeological dig. I was mortified myself that these protesters would stoop so low as to exploit our indigenous people to this level.
- While speaking with this group of indigineous leaders and elders, I also learnt, when I ask about the indigenous lady speaking at the protests and doing the smoking and welcome to country ceremony. That they were not aware of June Hanlen doing this. They asked what her name was and when I told them, they did not seem very impressed. June Hanlen may live on Darug lands, but she is not of the Darug people, or a Darug Custodian. What June Hanlen is doing is very disrespectful to the Darug people. What these protesters are doing is very disrespectful to the Darug people.
- I am absolutely disgusted at how CAWB and the associated protest groups have tried to exploit our local Indigenous people, for no other reason than to suit their self serving political agendas. That I'm afraid is not only disgusting but shameful.

BUILDING A BRIDGE OF RECONCILIATION

- In following on from "Sorry", I propose that this new bridge at Windsor (the birth place of colonisation), be the bridge that furthers the reconciliation process. Following on from "sorry", with "recognition". Recognising the true history of our Indigenous people, that happened at this location. This would be the right thing to do at this particular location, allowing further healing as a Nation to move forward.
- A memorial or metal plague for our indigenous people in recognising this history, the truth

and full history, placed at both the North & South ends of the new Windsor bridge. This might be more fitting in paying respect to our Indigenous Elders past and present, the Darug people, and for all our indigenous Australians. A new bridge of healing and reconciliation.

- Both history's would then be reconised at this location, a walk over the bridge from the Colonial and Convict History, would lead to Macquarie Park, our Indigenous History, the location where our Sorry Day ceremony is held. With the upgrading of the park, it is planned with our in indigenous people, for an indigenous footpath trail/walk, with gardens and plantings of bush tucker plants & traditional healing plants throughout this park, with signage explaining the plants traditional use.
- If you could make that happen, that would be Fantastic !

TOURISM

- Over the Past 20 years I have seen a massive decline in Windsor's Tourism. There are many attributing factors to this. The closing off of the main street into a Mall is probably one of the biggest problems. This created the town centre to be in fact, Bypassed. This killed Windsor. Other contributing factors have been, changes in bus timetables, a lack of parking facilities, parking time limits, a lack of accommodation in the region, a lack of regional promotion, a lack of product and activities, tour operators declining to near nonexistent numbers, mainly due to insurance costs which affect pricing and demand. The lack of support over a great many years by Hawkesbury City Council especially in the areas of tourism and events which has definitely not helped.
- I see the new bridge as a great advantage for Windsor and Hawkesbury's Tourism in being able to showcasing the Colonial History and Buildings at Thompson Square better than currently.
- With the current bridge, you do not get the opportunity while travelling to visually see the historical buildings or elements of Thompson Square. Your view is either blocked by the current road cutting, and you don't have the opportunity with navigating the road cutting and current round-about to visually look around. The new replacement bridge will give you that visual opportunity to actually see the Historical buildings and the entire Thompson Square Centre. The set of lights will also give the opportunity to look around as well. For the traveler, this could greatly generate the interest to stop, explore further and spend time and money.

If implementing my above suggestion concerning our indigenous history, memorial or plaque in recognition of that history, and treating this new bridge as a further bridge of healing and reconciliation, that also think that would greatly contribute to Windsor's, History and Tourism.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

I have heard many statements put out by protesters regarding future development.

- "The bridge will be the start of opening up the region for developers and development". I disagree with this view, a gross exaggeration. As much as the region may experience some new development and growth, the Hawkesbury Region is also very restricted given that 70% of the Hawkesbury is NPWS, and some areas World Heritage Listed and Protected, this cannot be developed. Approx. 22% being flood effected and below the 1 in 100, therefore restricted for developed, leaving approx 8% of which a vast amount has already been

developed. There are also the hindrances of existing local and state government policy regarding future development i.e. not being able to sub-divide, bushfire prone lands and meeting the standards of the PBP 2006 etc. It can be extremely expensive to build or develop in the Hawkesbury as opposed to other regions.

- "Current development without addressing infrastructure has cause the current Hawkesbury traffic issues."

As much as this might be true to some degree, I also feel the traffic increases are from times changing, that simple. Gone are the days of the 1 family car. Many young people are remaining at home longer. If all members of a family drive and have a car, of which can then be up to and beyond 4 car per household, depending how many are driving. I have driven past many households and seen this. Hawkesbury's own internal growth and lack of public transport on the other side of the bridges, could be greatly contributing to the traffic issues, and not necessarily new development. Either way, we do have a major traffic issue of which needs urgent addressing regarding the North Richmond bridge and the western side of the Hawkesbury.

- "Increased Truck movements due to Sand Mining at Tinda Creek (Putty), "was recently granted permission to double its annual production " -
Sand Mining has always been at Tinda Creek and has never been a problem or issue for decades. Tinda Creek Sand Mine has "Always" been a staged development as submitted many years ago. Please look into Hawkesbury City Councils own information, DA approval, conditions and consents. Also please note the "Rate per Ton" PAID to Hawkesbury City Council regularly as a condition. I find it somewhat disturbing and unethical that Hawkesbury City Councillors and mayor involved with the protesters would attack a business that they have consented to, and taking income and royalty from.

Sand deposits, a "naturally occurring resource", of erosion and sediment created by "nature itself" into our River systems, of which chokes our Rivers such as it has done at the mouth of the Colo River. Removal of the Sand that "Nature" through erosion deposits, assists with Flood Mitigation. I see this as a great Natural Resource, of which the Hawkesbury is lucky enough to have, of which contributes to our local economic growth, jobs and input into our community.... what's not to support about that.

POLITICAL ASPECTS

I am personally saddened by all of the political grandstanding centred around the New Windsor Replacement Bridge Project. I am not a member of a political party, I am not politically aligned. I'm just a long term resident that uses this bridge regularly to gain access to my nearest main town.

- RMS under a Labor State Government in 2009 gave our Council 4 "replacement" bridge options for a narrow, unsafe, tied warn out old girl. The replacement of Windsor Bridge was never intended to deal with traffic or flooding. It was to Replace the current Bridge at Windsor "FOR" access to Windsor, and not to bypass Windsor.
- All 12 Councillors voted for option 1, Not once, but twice, April & August 2009. That's when Option 1 changed to a decision, signed off on by the then Labor State Government. This was long before the Liberal's came into Government in 2011. So in short, the State Government did ask the locals, and the locals did choose Option 1, and the State Government is in fact doing what the people wanted, irrelevant of which party holds political power of the State Government.

- The protesters and tent appeared in 2013. CAWB and associated groups are all Greens and Labor associated groups.
- I don't know why the protester still talk in options ? A Decision was Made ! By our then Council..... There are no more options on the table. These is no either or, regarding a bridge or bypass.
- The Protesters took their case to Court, before a Judge and lost.
- The political garbage does NOT interest me.... nor a great many others in the Hawkesbury on the NTH side of the Windsor Bridge. All I see is Political grandstanding of a few self serving individuals with agendas, and a very small minority wanting their own way. Like spoilt children, holding the new Replacement bridge "for" Windsor access as ransom, and pitting community member against community member, at an extra cost burden to the taxpayer. Any cost burden to the Government in any manner, is at the taxpayer expense. I'm sick of seeing my tax dollars WASTED by these protesters.
- My take on why this project has suddenly turned all political since 2011. Liberals gained power, Labor and Greens simply have their sights set on the next State and Federal Elections, they don't really give a dam about the New Bridge Project or the Hawkesbury People, this is just a political platform for them. Please just hurry up and build the bridge.

BULLYING & HARASSMENT

- For the past 4 years anyone in the Hawkesbury who supports the new bridge is shut down on social media (facebook), from having a voice or opinion on the new Bridge. Or for it to be seen or heard. If you make comment on CAWB or any of their many associated group social media pages, first, they try to convince you of their thinking and sway you to their views and opinions. If this fails, you are then attacked, bullied and harassed. Following this, any of your comments that dispute their views, are deleted and then you are blocked from ever commenting on their pages again. Censorship and only a one sided view.
- If you make any comment on other local community social media pages, such as our local News Papers facebook page, again the same process, they first try to convince you of their false facts, if this fails, you are publically attacked, personally insulted, bullied and harassed. There are a few of the protesters that take this to a whole new level of extremely vile and disgusting comments, attacks and foul things stated and said, things that should never be said to another human being, let alone said to people on local community public social media pages. This vile extreme level, usually results in the admin's of these social media pages deleting the post and associated comments. Again, the end result, expression of your view or opinion taken from you, your voice taken from you, shut down and censored. If you are someone very locally know ledged, that can dispute the protesters propaganda, CAWB and associated groups feel threatened by what you have to say, not only are you blocked from commenting on their pages, you are personally singled out for group attack across all of the local social media pages, bullied and harassed, even if the post topic is not about the bridge or even related to the bridge. This behavior has happened to me and a great many others. No-one is aloud any other view than theirs. You are 100% shut down and censored.
- Many long term Hawkesbury residents are well aware of the connections between the protester groups and Hawkesbury City Council Councillor's. Some of our Councillors are greatly involved in this; Mayor Councillor Mary Lyons-Buckett, Councillor Peter Reynolds (head of CAWB), Councillor John Ross (head of Hawkesbury Wobblers), Councillor Danielle Wheeler, Councillor Emma-Jane Garrows, Ex Councillor Leigh Williams, Ex Councillor Christine Paine (both of these Ex Councillors voted for option 1 in 2009, twice, while on Council at that

time, they both now sit in the protester tent). All these Councillors are involved. Even our Federal Member is involved, I question why, it's not a federal issue. All the very vile social media attacks on residents are made by people that were on these Councillors election tickets. All attacks of bullying and harassment can be connected back to associates of these Councillors, to CAWB and the other associated groups. There is no democracy in the Hawkesbury, tyranny and censorship if anyone disagrees with them. There is a set of rules for these protesters, and another set of rules for the rest of the Hawkesbury. They seem to be a law unto themselves.

- Retribution within our council has also been a long term practice. Many Hawkesbury residents fear retribution from these people if they speak up, especially if they have already been attacked, bullied and harassed for doing so in the past. Especially also if you own property or a business in the Hawkesbury region. CAWB and associated groups, and the Hawkesbury City Councillor's connected, can cause serious damage for anyone speaking up or having an alternate view or opinion to them, and yes, it happens, regularly. Many in the Hawkesbury fear retribution. Again, shutting down the real voice of this community. They then pass themselves off as speaking for the majority, when in fact, they are really a small minority, just with the power to do a lot of harm to people.
- Ray Hadley recently (Early February 2018), call out our Mayor regarding bullying. He was absolutely 100 % correct. She seems to also endorse the behavior, while trying to make out she doesn't. He also called out one of the worst bullies in the region, Kim Smith, number 3 on the Hawkesbury Wobbler's election ticket, her sister Jan Sparkes number 2, just as bad. Peter Nicholson, number 3 on Councillor Peter Reynolds ticket. These 3 would have to be the most vile disgusting human beings I think I have ever come across in my life, very nasty people, doing the dirty work for their number 1's. Being a victim of their abuse, I have many screen-shots. The intention is to either discredit you, falsely vilify you and character assassinate. Shutting people down. All of the Bullies are connected, all of the protest groups are connected and they control our Council.
- The Hawkesbury people are starting to stand up to them, about time, it's gone on for way too long, people have had enough and it's gone way too far. I find it all very sad and disappointing.