

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

**Name:** Mr Keith & Mrs June Notley

**Date received:** 27 January 2018

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To the members of the Portfolio Committee No. 5 Windsor Bridge Replacement Project,

Thank you for the opportunity to hear our views on the Project.

**Using the current bridge:**

As we live in Wilberforce, including operating a business in Wilberforce, we use the current Windsor Bridge daily. As daily users we cross the bridge approx. 2 to 6 times per day depending on our work/life commitments. For us and our employees the Windsor bridge is one of three options available to users on the North/West side of the Hawkesbury. Second option is Richmond Bridge. Third option is to go over the Blue Mountains.

**Our experience of current traffic/transport problems for the Windsor bridge:**

Depending on the time of day, does depend on the amount of traffic crossing over the bridge.

Mornings from 6.30am to 9am is congested with traffic backed up from Wilberforce on the Wilberforce Rd to Bridge St Windsor. Wilberforce Rd has several roads that merge in, main ones include traffic from King Rd and traffic from the Singleton Putty Rd, one road leading on to Windsor Bridge. This includes traffic from a large catchment area of the Hawkesbury North/West, such areas as Glossodia, East Kurrajong, Kurrajong Heights, Colo Heights, Ebenezer, Sackville etc. The traffic consists of cars, trucks, semi-trailers & tipper trucks with dog trailers all using Wilberforce Rd to head over the bridge. Also merging into Wilberforce Rd from surrounding areas including Freemans Reach, Glossodia, Kurmond at the approach to the bridge is Freemans Reach Rd. It can take over 45 minutes for the traffic backed up from Wilberforce to travel over the bridge into Windsor. From Wilberforce to the Windsor bridge is a distance of 8 km.

Evenings from 4pm to 7pm is also congested with traffic backed up from a two lane Windsor Rd at Vineyard, into a single lane Windsor Rd from McGraths Hill that merges into Bridge Street Windsor to go over the bridge to the North/West side where many of us call home! Other roads that merge onto Bridge St Windsor include George St, Macquarie St, Court St and Old Bridge Rd.

Second option for us to get home is over the Richmond Bridge. Again this is fraught with traffic from Blacktown, Penrith and Windsor areas. Traffic is backed up at all approaches to the Richmond Bridge. Again this can take over an hour to get to Wilberforce from Windsor.

Third option available for people that live on the North/West side is to travel over the Blue Mountains and head down the Bells Line of Rd towards Nth Richmond a few hours travelling.

**Current social, economic, heritage concerns:**

The current proposal does nothing to improve the flow of traffic and therefore the amenity through this part of Windsor with the trucks, semi-trailers & tipper trucks with dog trailers will be on the same route.

Option 1 will not aid in attracting tourism into the area due to the above traffic noise, congestion and the destruction of part of Thompson Square. A by-pass route would provide the added benefit of a second flood evacuation route for the area.

Heritage concerns, I have observed Flagstones being uncovered during the current archaeological works and then covered with bitumen and as reported in our local paper a Brick Barrel Drain being dug up. We hear nothing from RMS about what has been discovered in this current round of archaeological digs. The Windsor area has much in the way of heritage, being one of the earliest colonial settlements in Australia. The Hawkesbury River area was farmed to provide food for the colony, Thompson Square is one of the oldest public squares in Australia, the Macquarie Arms Hotel still operating today. The Tebbutt Observatory, Windsor Court House, St Matthew's Catholic Church runs the oldest Catholic School in Australia, St Matthews Anglican Church built in 1817, and the list goes on.

We know that there has been changes to some of these historical buildings and Thompson Square but let us preserve what we have left not further destruction as option 1 will do.

**Perceived transport problems with the replacement bridge option 1:**

The proposed design of the replacement will not improve traffic flow or travel times but will add another set of traffic lights at George St which leads into a mall at that point? The replacement bridge still only provides one route for traffic in and out of Windsor.

**Political Observations:**

Presented to the Hawkesbury community were 9 options for the replacement bridge. There was no real community consultation with the RMS stating at a meeting that the current option 1 for the proposed Windsor bridge was the only one they were going to build.

We believe the group “Community Action for Windsor Bridge” have detailed engineer reports that confirm that the current bridge is structurally sound and is lacking regular maintenance by the RMS. Our current State member has made little comment on the matter, which is probably the most important current issue for the area and not listen to and supported the concerns and views of his constituents in the Hawkesbury. This has been going on for over 10 years.

**Our view:**

Leave the current bridge for historical purposes. Make repairs and use as a tourist attraction. Thompson Square and surrounding historical buildings will remain intact.

Build a by-pass from Wilberforce Rd that merges onto Windsor Rd at McGraths Hill, where it becomes two lanes, thereby providing two separate routes, one for the traffic crossing the river heading to Wilberforce, Glossodia, Freemans Reach, East Kurrajong etc and the current (Windsor Rd) for traffic heading to Windsor, Bligh Park, South Windsor etc, separating traffic to improve traffic congestion for peak times and also at times of flood and tourism.

Again thank you for the opportunity to hear our views on the Project. We would be happy to discuss our concerns regarding this matter should you wish to contact us.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Keith & June Notley