

**Submission
No 197**

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

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SUBMISSION

To: Portfolio Committee No.5 – Industry and Transport
INQUIRY INTO THE WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

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Submitted by: Amanda Waller,

Background:

Life long resident of Pitt Town (58 years)

Descendent of many convicts, the first being Robert Hobbs who arrived in 1791 aboard the “Active” (Second Fleet), and free settlers, such as, John and Elizabeth Grono, who arrived in 1799 aboard the “Buffalo” and were one of the founding families to build Ebenezer Church, Ebenezer.

As a result of my convict and settler heritage I have a strong interest in researching these links and a great respect for what these people achieved under very trying conditions. They came before us and established a colony that thrived from their hard work and toil and the leadership of Governors, in particular, Governor Lachlan Macquarie. The achievements of Governor Macquarie can still be seen today and are a testament to his vision, a great example being Thompson Square.

ISSUES

1. History and Heritage of Windsor Bridge
2. History and Heritage of Thompson Square
3. Impacts/Outcomes for Proposed Bridge, Option 1
4. Heritage Importance to Windsor

Issue 1:

Windsor Bridge was opened in 1874 and is a visually modest structure. The scale and proportion of the bridge fits well into its historic location. The design of the bridge came from the NSW Department of Public Works. The construction was the work of William King Dixon and Andrew Turnbull, both notable engineers in the colony.

Windsor Bridge has been developed and upgraded since it was opened, which has allowed it to remain a serviceable and safe structure until the present day, for example,

- In 1897 the bridge deck was raised by 2.4 metres (approx)
- In 1922 the timber beam structure and deck were replaced with precast reinforced concrete

Windsor Bridge has a real charm when viewed from the river level. The structure can truly be appreciated when viewed from this level as it sits well within the vista of the river, not dominating, but complimenting the view of its surroundings.

Issue 2:

Thompson Square is one of the legacies left for all Australians by Governor Macquarie. Thompson Square is not just the grassed area, but comprises those Colonial, Georgian and Victorian structures that surround this grassed area. Previously the Square was known as "Bell Post Square". Governor Macquarie re-named it Thompson Square after Andrew Thompson who arrived in 1791 aboard the "Pitt". Andrew Thompson impressed all the Governors of the colony up to and including Macquarie. By naming the Square after Thompson, Governor Macquarie acknowledged all had been achieved by this man and created the idea of "a fair go". Thompson Square is symbolic to our nation of what we all regard as an Australian right, "a fair go".

The buildings of Thompson Square are remarkable. They are fine examples of those building styles mentioned above. The fact that they are still standing and in good condition is a testament to how special and valued Thompson Square is to both those who have lived and worked there, and to the visitors and locals who frequent this special place.

Issue 3:

The proposed bridge, Option 1, that the NSW Government is forging ahead with, despite strong opposition from within the Community will be a disaster for Thompson Square. To place a modern structure in an elevated position amongst this most historic of places is outrageous. There can be no justification for destroying this precinct. The approach to the Bridge from the traffic lights at the Macquarie Street/Bridge Street intersection is a "bottle neck" with no solution to change this situation. The idea of adding a third lane to the new bridge will not achieve anything, except to allow more traffic to sit on the deck of the bridge with driver frustration as the traffic will need to merge to exit the bridge. It has already been stated by the RMS that Option 1 and the Bridge Street/Macquarie Street intersection will be at capacity when it is completed. There is absolutely no advantage to construct Option 1 as there will be no traffic advantages and it will destroy the Thompson Square precinct.

The RMS are currently undertaking archaeological works in anticipation of commencing construction of Option 1. As a result, significant finds have been made of colonial infrastructure, the brick barrel drains, commissioned by Governor Macquarie c1810/1811. This is another reason to halt any new bridge construction in this area. This infrastructure is some of the oldest in Australia, it needs to be preserved and protected for all Australians.

There are other options to Option 1. Building a Bypass around Windsor further downstream, that will not destroy this historic area and create a traffic solution for Windsor; this has been needed for many years and is now critical in 2018.

Issue 4:

The importance of Thompson Square to Windsor's historic precinct cannot be understated. The area attracts thousands of visitors each year who spend money in the cafes, restaurants, shops and Craft Markets. This is essential to the local economy. Windsor is a well-known destination for its history. The importance of history to all Australians can be demonstrated by the fact that tourists make an effort to visit this historic precinct at

Thompson Square and the township of Windsor. It emphasises that our built history, and its preservation, is important to us all and we should make an effort to save it when it is threatened by those who disregard its value to Local Communities and to all Australians who have a right to save and enjoy this precious heritage.

CONCLUSION

- Save the Windsor Bridge; it is safe and only requires some maintenance by the RMS to keep it that way
- Protect the legacy left by Governor Macquarie to all Australians by saving Thompson Square from destruction by an ill thought out piece of modern infrastructure
- Recommend the construction of a Bypass to solve Windsor's traffic problems both now and into the future
- Protect the local economy of Windsor and allow all Australians to visit and enjoy this special and unique heritage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Halt the progress of the Windsor Bridge Replacement, Option 1
- Replace Option 1 with a Bypass to create a proper traffic solution for Windsor
- Protect the historic precinct of Thompson Square
- Protect the economy of Windsor
- Protect our history for all Australians

Yours faithfully

Amanda Waller