

**Submission
No 282**

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

Name: Mr James Parbery

Date received: 28 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.

I am writing to express my opposition and objections to the proposal to replace the existing Windsor Bridge with a new bridge 35m downstream.

Some of the reasons for my objections are summarised as follows;

1. The existing bridge has been assessed by engineers and found to be of **sound construction**.
2. A new bridge will not solve existing or future **traffic chaos**.
3. A new bridge and its approaches **will destroy the character and heritage** of Australia's oldest Town Square. It will have a negative social, historical and economic impact on Windsor's community.
4. There is a **much better solution; to build a BYPASS** - this will solve traffic issues and preserve the delicate fabric of Australia's oldest town.

Details of the above Summary;

1. RTA/RMS engineers and the highly regarded bridge engineers **Peter Stewart Consulting Pty Ltd** have found the existing Windsor Bridge to be of sound construction*. It was built in 1874 with the option to carry railway stock, therefore it was built above specification for road traffic. It was further reinforced in the 1930s and requires no load limit to modern traffic. The bridge has withstood every flood since 1874. It now carries around 3000 trucks per day**, mostly articulated lorries, in addition to many thousands of cars. The bridge is more than adequate to convey local traffic while the majority of traffic, including the increasing number of trucks, would be better carried via a bypass which could traverse the open planes north of Windsor to meet with Wilberforce Road, north of South Creek.

*In the five year period 2012-2017 heavy vehicles, predominantly articulated trucks, increased by 48%. There are currently approximately 3000 heavy vehicles crossing Windsor Bridge each day.
CAWB Traffic Count 2017

** "The bridge can be refurbished at a cost such that it can function for the next 50 years with little ongoing maintenance." (\$12.5 million for a load limited bridge (16 tonne)).
Report on Structural Condition of the existing Windsor Bridge, p4, Peter Stewart Consulting Pty Ltd, 26 Aug 2013

2. As indicated above, the existing Windsor Bridge and its approaches is carrying an enormous amount of traffic and this amount increases every year. A new bridge with one extra lane **will not solve the traffic chaos** that is already choking Windsor. It is not possible to widen the approach roads to the bridge, therefore peak hour traffic is backed up by some kilometres on the approaches to Windsor, causing much frustration, noise, pollution, lost man-hours and with great economic cost to individuals and to the community. Therefore a new bridge, just

35 metres downstream, will simply be a massive waste of taxpayers' money with little benefit to the community, either now or into the future.

3. A new bridge and its approaches **will ruin the character and heritage** of Australia's oldest Town Square. I believe it will have a severely negative social, historical and economic impact on Windsor's community and its visitors. Thompson Square dates to the earliest period of European settlement, the 1790s. It was formerly laid out in 1810 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and named 'Thompson Square' in 1811. It is bordered by many historic and significant buildings, such as The Macquarie Arms Hotel, dated 1815, and 'The Doctor's House' c. 1830. The oldest existing government infrastructure in Australia, built by convicts in 1814, lies directly beneath the path of the new bridge and is to be covered by three lanes of concrete and bitumen if this project goes ahead.
The square was once a popular place for picnics and other social activities by locals and tourists. However the increased noise and air pollution from trucks has made it a less desirable place to visit. Windsor's unique position as Australia's oldest town, its heritage architecture, its proximity to Sydney and its rural setting on the Hawkesbury River make Windsor an ideal place for a tourist precinct, where locals and visitors can enjoy the potentially charming and tranquil setting. A new bridge and busy road through the heart of Windsor will destroy this potential and will be at great cost to Windsor's social fabric and its economic potential as a tourist destination.
4. As noted by local groups, as well as independent and government agencies, the logical solution to Windsor's traffic chaos is to build a bypass with a new, multi-lane bridge, appropriately upstream or downstream of Windsor. This is the only logical solution. Possibly the best route is a branch from Windsor Road leading to an elevated roadway across the wastes of Pitt Town Bottoms, bridging the Hawkesbury River between South Creek and Wilberforce.

In conclusion it would be a national disgrace and a loss to Australia's earliest colonial heritage if the government/RMS was allowed to destroy the heart of this town for an expensive new concrete bridge that offers no practical advantage to commuters.

I call on the government to immediately stop the RMS-sponsored excavation of Thompson Square, to maintain the existing bridge for use by local traffic, to apologise to the Hawkesbury Community for misleading propaganda, belligerence and heritage vandalism, and then to commence earnest plans for a Windsor bypass, with a view for completion before 2025.

Yours sincerely

James Parbery

28 February 2018