

**Submission
No 318**

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Cr John Ross
Date received: 28 January 2018

SUBMISSION

N.S.W. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL – PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE No.5

WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

AUTHOR: JOHN S. ROSS.

COUNCILLOR – HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL

ELECTED: SEPTEMBER 2016.

REPRESENTING: “HAWKESBURY WOBBLERS”.

(INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS)

PREAMBLE

- THE AUTHOR: John Ross, aged 74yrs; has 56yrs, experience in the private sector, manufacturing industry /commerce, continuing.
- ROLES: Accounting, Administration, Management, SME operator.
- COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Joined with CAWB group: 21/07/2013, as a voluntary “ambassador” following public rally. Continuing role in the legal occupation of THOMPSON SQUARE- each weekend.
Approached July 2016 by “HAWKESBUURY WOBBLERS” to stand as candidate in September Local Government Election.

Elected

HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL: Active participation, including community consultation, support for community citizen groups, and individuals.

PLANK.

Opposition: W.B.R.P. - OPTION No.1. - TOWNSHIP BY- PASS

Support

Hawkesbury City Council Submission.

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PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE – No.5

1 a). PRESENT WINDSOR BRIDGE – GENERAL.

1. RMS heritage listed.
2. Load Restriction: NIL.
3. Lane widths: Comparable – Parramatta and Victoria Rds.
4. Lane widths: Greater than Singleton (Putty) Rd; crossing of Buttsworth Creek, 4kms; Nth. (Wilberforce).
5. Scale: Consistent with built environment, affords clear rural sight lines from the Terrace, to all higher elevations.
6. Noise emissions: Southern side cutting mitigates vehicular impacts, including hill climb.
7. Flood immunity: Superior to Windsor Rd; between Pitt Town Rd; and Fitzroy Bridge. Since 2015, two (2) weather events have closed Windsor Rd; resulting in all traffic being diverted.
8. Flood immunity: Superior to Singleton (Putty) Rd; crossing of Buttsworth Creek, 4kms; Nth. (Wilberforce).

PRESENT WINDSOR BRIDGE – MAINTENANCE.

Safety: Half year (6mths.) surveyor and laser integrity site surveys – up to 3 days on site.

1. Pavement condition: Visible deformation of expansion joint elements, caused by abnormally hot weather (48°C.), not addressed.
2. Rainwater: dispersal of flows onto roadway, drain directly onto underside support beams, thence directly into stream. Failure to mitigate unnecessary adverse pollutants affecting structure. Plumbing directing to offsite collection basin on Nth; bank – absent.
3. Stream inspection: Since 2015, two (2) work punt visits. Crew removed minor failed concrete pieces. Limited corrosion in steel reinforcement

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1. a). PRESENT WINDSOR BRIDGE –RENOVATION METHODS.

1. Removal of corroded reinforcement bar.
2. Introduction of carbon fibre rods to beam fabric.
3. Re-mould support beams as necessary.
4. Projected cost: Range from: \$M.3.0 -\$M.7.0 est.

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1. a). PRESENT WINDSOR BRIDGE – JUSTIFICATION for DEMOLITION.

(PRE – CONDITION – “FLOODING”).

1. Consequential – collapse existing structure.
2. Consequential – ten (10) existing pylons compromise stream flow.
3. Navigation – improved, industrial?
4. Excision – projected cost – sub stream floor- \$M. 15.0 - \$M. 18.0
est.

REBUTTAL.

- A. Hydrological study – NIL.
- B. Windsor town ship – NOT impacted by full force of total stream
flows.
- C. Historic (current) stream flow – initial bank breached North of
Windsor town ship. Location: “breakaway” – 3kms. Upstream.
- D. South Creek – confluence downstream of Windsor town ship.
Creek flood waters enter principal stream flow, causing
Hawkesbury flow impediment. Principal flow slows, causing
upstream elevation, reducing potential damage to in- stream
structures closer to town ship.
- E. “Viewing” platform –R.M.S. proposed partial retention of
Southern bank element of current structure. Inconsistent with
R.M.S. demolition reasoning.

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(b) (i) REPLACEMENT BRIDGE PROJECT – COMMUNITY OPTIONS.

1. Township by-pass – NIL proposed, “cost”.
2. Township near-pass – two (2) proposed downstream.
3. Current route – gained support from “near-pass” residents, as a least worst option on offer. All options R.M.S. proposed, failed to respect township or its residents, its heritage, or tourists, or boating /aquatic devotees, road users.

(b) (ii) REPLACEMENT BRIDGE PROJECT – STRATEGIC OUTCOMES.

1. Plan – simply “artists’ impressions”. Precise site location / route – NOT Established.
2. Engineering plan – imprecise (musings) – NOT Established.
3. Configuration – unknown. Latest artists’ impression portrays three (3) functioning traffic lanes. Two (2) vehicles from North exit Southerly direction. One(1) vehicle from South exit Northerly direction.

4. Contra-flow – initially rejected out of hand. Current Stance – UNKNOWN. Time of day variability – UNKNOWN.
5. Road deck – abandoning pedestrian, cycle, breakdown lanes – potential 4 vehicular lane stream crossing?
6. Route utilisation – R.M.S. projected volume increments – understated, notably heavy vehicles.
7. Network capacity – reduced. Intersections – Bridge / Macquarie Sts; Bridge / George Sts; key focal points. Infrastructure remains static, except Bridge / George Sts; Implementation of traffic signals, will require co-ordination with current Macquarie St; lights. Laden vehicles approaching George St; from Macquarie St; will be expected to clear George St; lights without being halted by light changes. Phasing of lights to permit George St. intersection to be traversed, is likely to result in lowering volume throughput, per time unit. Added delay, accumulation of stationary vehicles.
8. Widening Bridge St; from Fitzroy Bridge, North, to George St; to alleviate capacity shortfall – significant heritage assets lost, including “Telford” roadway, remnant colonial goal / garrison stockade.
9. Windsor Rd; section Pitt Town Rd; North, to Macquarie St. – roadway widening, (previous point) if implemented, necessitates elevation and widening to Southern bank, South Creek.

10. Additional two (2) lane bridge crossing of South Creek, in conjunction with No. 9, above.

11. Project cost – points # 8 + # 9 + #10., combined : \$M. 140.0 - \$M. 160.0 est. (STAGE No. 2 – W.B.R.P.).

12. Project cost – STAGE No. 1 WBRP: \$M. 160.0 - \$M. 180.0 est. (CURRENT APPROVAL).

13. Project cost – STAGES No. 1 + No. 2 W.B.R.P. up to \$M. 340.0 est.

XXX
XXX

14. BY-PASS – (out of town) Project cost - \$M. 350.0 est.

XXX
XX

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE – No. 5.

b) (III) REPLACEMENT BRIDGE PROJECT – Economic /Social / Heritage Impacts.

1. Business establishments located on George St; Thompson Square, likely experience significant deterioration in patronage, for their food and hospitality offerings. Restricted access from the North, by time of day roadway turning embargo, at the intersection of Bridge and George Sts; (traffic signals).
2. Business establishments in 1., above, suffer loss of trade from reduced left turning road traffic – Bridge to George Sts; as a consequence of traffic signal installation. No impact statement.
3. Windsor bound tourist traffic, entering the town from Bridge St; discouraged in both North and South directions, again attributed to traffic signal installation.
4. Vehicular access to Gov. Phillip Park for the recreational boating fraternity – adversely affected by altered access rules. Intersection Bridge and Court Sts.
 - NIL right turn from Bridge St; (North, of Fitzroy bridge), to Court St. Intersection Bridge and George

Sts. (East); - NIL right turn from Bridge St; at George St; traffic Signals.

5. Vehicles towing water craft to access Gov. Phillip park, from Bridge St; Nth, (including Macquarie St;), will be required to cross the stream, perform a U turn at the roundabout, cnr; of Freemans Reach and Singleton (Putty) Rds., then cross the stream (North to South), cross George St; to exit left into Court Street.

6. Access to George St. Nth. From Bridge St. Nth. (left turn) will be illegal for vehicles with a combined length of eight (8) metres; or above. Towed water craft must travel to Court St; before a permissible left turn manoeuvre can be conducted.

7. Residential traffic bound for the “Peninsular”, emanating from Bridge St. Sth., (including Macquarie St;), will similarly be required to cross the stream two (2) times, prior to turning left into George St; North. Significant inconvenience, time loss, expense.

8. Existing built heritage assets will be adversely impacted by the high volume of heavy vehicular movement (3,000 +/-day). Sand / soil foundation movements, resulting from vibration of carriageway base materials.

9. Excessive vehicular noise emissions – elevated structure, replacing current route.
10. Visual impact of elevated structure inconsistent with surrounding built environment.
11. No protection to the fabric of existing built heritage assets. Building facades ONLY, given State protection.
12. Destruction of ALL mature trees within “parkland” element adjoining the construction zone – Southern bank. Hoop pine alone is assessed as having an age in excess of 100-120 years. Rare specimen.

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b) (iv) REPLACEMENT BRIDGE PROJECT-Flood Immunity.

A. Windsor Road between Pitt Town Road and Macquarie suffers inundation BEFORE Windsor Bridge closure. Twice in the last three (3) years, South Creek flows have resulted in closure of that section of road, while Windsor Bridge was NOT affected. Increasing residential development in the catchment of South Creek (Quakers Hill and Schofields primarily) have permanently increased the rapidity of run off from rainfall. WBRP Stage 1., will not address.

B. WBRP exit onto Singleton Rd.(Putty Rd.), utilises the existing road network. Flood plain was, flood plain is now! NIL flood immunity improvement.

b) (v) PROJECT ASSESSMENT PROCESS.

1. Project approval contrary to recommendations in external consultant reports.
2. Contrary to DPE&E stating preparation of SCMP was completed prior to the project approval, subsequent disclosures have invalidated that assertion.

3. DPE&E had drafted SCMP “FRAMEWORK” document. A series of “dot” points, preliminary to preparation of any comprehensive site assessment report, only, NO SCMP !

b) (vi) PLANNING / PROCUREMENT.

1. WBRP project – Cost over runs + delayed implementation.
2. WBRP OPTION 1. Project cost: \$M.160.0 – \$M. 180.0 est. (Stage 1. Only).
3. WBRP OPTION 1. Project cost: \$M. 140.0 - \$M.160.0 est. (Stage 2. Only).
4. Stage 2. NOT ANNOUNCED. Planned elevation Windsor Road, from Pitt Town Road to Macquarie Street, Windsor. Plan includes new (second) South Creek bridge crossing, North bound only. Overcomes road flooding impairment. Two (2) flooding events since 2015, caused diversion of all that traffic onto Jim Anderson bridge (Hawkesbury Valley Way), before the Windsor bridge was able to be accessed, crossed.
5. WBRP completion. Project cost: To \$M. 340.0 est !
6. WBRP Current expenditure: \$M. 30.0 - \$M. 37.0 est.

7. RMS archaeological contracts awarded on piece meal drip, contrary to Departmental governance requirements.
8. RMS known & projected expenditures. Exceed N.S.W. BUDGET allocation of \$M. 7.0, Y/e -30/06/'18.
9. RMS consultant heritage report (AAJV)- factually erroneous.
10. RMS – Landscape Plan (deficient) released BEFORE SCMP completed. SCMP is the foundation document, to inform the Landscape Plan preparation, adoption.
Contravention of Ministerial Approval.
11. Landscape Plan to be revised. Second period of Public Consultation required.
12. Released SCMP considered flawed by Hawkesbury City Council.
13. Hawkesbury City Council initiating own SCMP, engaging alternate consultant services.
14. DPE&E + RMS – Failure to consult with Hawkesbury City Council, per Ministerial Approval. Consultation of “operational “aspects of the WBRP, with HCC officers, does NOT satisfy consultation with the governing elected body – Hawkesbury City Council.

15. DPE&E and RMS communications and compliance: avoided, evasive, unhelpful.

16. RMS community updates: not factual, “spin.” Apparent political imperatives, meddling. Reference 3rd, lane alteration.

c) ANY OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

1. Justification for the WBRP appears to be solely related to the long-term availability of raw materials for the greater Sydney area.

2. Cessation of extraction at Emu Plains and completion of the Penrith Lakes Scheme, have caused sand and aggregate requirements to be drawn from further afield, including Oberon and Dubbo regions.

3. The Hawkesbury flood plain is a known source of both hard stone and river sand.

4. During 2017, NSW Dept. of Industry submitted a “public authority response” letter to Hawkesbury City Council, responding to a land re-zoning proposal affecting the Richmond Lowlands flood plain, East of Nth. Richmond road bridge. In that communication, the Department opposed the proposal, citing access to

State Significant raw material reserves in the region, as critical.

5. State resource maps dating as far back as the 1960's, earmarked reserves over much of that area. Some small-scale extraction on the flood plain is ongoing.

6. A second major source of crushed and block sandstone, in the Hawkesbury, is located in the Mellong area, some 85kms; North of Windsor, off the Singleton (Putty) Road. Currently, extraction is conducted at Tinda Creek quarry, with SSI approval from DPE&E. Portion of that quarry's material is trucked via Windsor for the metropolitan area. Although this may not exceed 200,000 tonnes/annum, approval for greater volumes, possibly double, is being pursued by the operator.

7. WBRP Project has been fashioned at its current location, to satisfy two objectives. Facilitation of intended Hawkesbury floodplain extraction. Secondly, upgraded extraction rates emanating from Tinda Creek.

8. Removal of the current bridge is viewed as imperative to enable the local (Richmond) extraction to be viable.

9. Material extracted from the floodplain will require processing (washing, crushing, grading etc.). Processing, based on Emu Plains operations, is conducted 24hours/ day.
10. On site processing deemed impractical. Background noise level is measured at around 30Db, outside daylight hours. (Many studies by acoustic experts support that finding.). Industrial noise would be intolerable for residents of North Richmond, Richmond and Windsor.
11. Overcoming industrial noise impact. Transfer of extract by road, or river, to dedicated processing location.
12. River movement selected. Truck transfer considered to have greater adverse community impacts, potential of night time “curfew,” and or, vehicle restrictions.
13. River transport logistics. Large capacity barges, formed into a flotilla, towed to dedicated processing site, downstream of Windsor town centre.
14. River transport impediments. Windsor bridge! Estuary weed growth.

15. Windsor bridge construction. Ten (10) caisson pylons support the existing structure. Their spacing is forty (40) feet between each.

16. WBRP OPTION 1. Concrete pylons, two (2) in the stream, only. NOTE: Each pylon is supplemented by “barge deflector” supplement, visible above stream level.

17. WBRP OPTION 1. Designed specifically to permit industrial vessels plying upstream beyond Windsor town. No such activity now permitted.

18. Extract processing. A site on the Northern bank of the river will be used to process, then truck out saleable product via new Option 1; bridge.

19. USER PAYS – ROYALTIES. Cost benefit calculations will no doubt be predicated on Treasury royalty income, from the extractive industries operating on the Lowlands, and Tinda Creek respectively. Tinda Creek is now understood to be paying RMS royalties based on tonnages trucked out.

20. Royalty Levels. Sand may attract from \$ 0.70 - \$1.00 /tonne trucked out. Hard stone: \$2.60 - \$3.50 / tonne trucked out.

21. Project cost recovery. With the inclusion of Stage 2, royalties may be expected to recoup the total investment within 15 yrs. – 18yrs.

22. Another view on extract transfer to processing plant. Pipeline transfer of slurry, using gravity (land fall), plus additional water propulsion. Water removed, stored in retention basin until settled. “Clean” water transferred to detention storage in preparation for return pumping back upstream.

23. Project merit – NIL.

24. Failure of State parliamentary members to represent their electorate views, oversee appropriate resource allocation, failure to advocate fiscal rectitude in conduct of public works and road projects, failure to justify WBRP project on any acceptable rational reasoned thinking, failure to address community beliefs that WBRP exhibits partiality contrary to the public interest.

Contact details of the Author.

NAME: *John S. Ross.*

STATUS: Private Citizen.

ELECTED OFFICE HOLDER : *Councillor – Hawkesbury City
Council, 2016.*