

**Submission
No 321**

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

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Legislative Council
Portfolio Committee No.5 – Industry and Transport
Parliament House
Macquarie Street,
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To the Committee Chair,

Inquiry into Windsor Bridge Replacement Project

Background:

As a local resident I would like to comment on the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project.

From the time the decision was made to replace Windsor Bridge the Government through its agency the RMS has put forward various procedures to bring the job to fruition.

Public Participation in the Decision:

In 2011 the RMS released a documents showing nine options to replace the bridge and inviting the public to comment on the proposals.

Option 1 was obviously the RMS preferred option. There were very few of the respondents that preferred this option.

Later on in 2011 the RMS conducted forums in Windsor for the public to participate in the project. From attending these forums it was obvious the RMS did not want anyone to put any alternative to Option 1.

We were only allowed to discuss landscaping and other features of Option 1.

This was the government's way of 'consulting' the public on any major project before commencing construction. No input was allowed proposing any alternative to Option 1. Many of the respondents to the Nine Option document proposed other alternatives to that put forward by the RMS. Eight of the nine options all passed through Windsor's narrow streets, only the Pit Town option could be considered a Bypass to the town.

It was obvious from this process that the RMS' Option 1 was the only feasible choice. The other options were merely lines on a map which were never seriously considered by RMS to be possible.

Traffic Benefits:

As the new bridge will be initially two lanes wide (later three) no improvement in traffic movement would result. There is now in excess of 22,000 vehicle movements per day over the existing bridge. A Bypass would resolve most current traffic problems. With the retention of the current Bridge for use by light traffic, diverting it onto The Terrace would allow the full restoration of Thompson Square. It was in the 1930s that the cutting was put in the Square dividing the Square into two portions, with little use being made of the lower part of the Square.

Business & Tourism:

The current proposal will not have any benefit for local businesses, the traffic will continue either along Windsor Road or Macquarie Street.

As for Tourism the Option 1 does not encourage tourism due to the constant traffic flow through Thompson Square and the continuation of dividing the residents in the Peninsula from the main part of Windsor.

Flood Immunity:

The proposed height of the Option 1 Bridge is to be 9.8 metres, but flood immunity will not improve greatly as the low point on Wilberforce Road is 8.4 metres, (current bridge height is 7 metres). The proposal should include increasing the height of Wilberforce Road to the same level (9.8 metres) to have the maximum benefit from flood immunity.

Heritage Impact:

Due to the project being part of State Significant Infrastructure the project proponents have been able to avoid scrutiny and any recommendations by the Heritage Council. The Heritage Council considered Thompson Square to be such a significant site that it recommended that the project not proceed with Option 1.

The new bridge as proposed will further destroy the historical and heritage value of the Square by the increase of traffic running very close to the three buildings on the north east side, the noise especially from trucks being level with the buildings (and not in the cutting).

There is currently archaeology works going on in the Square which has unearthed the significant brick barrel drain (built 1815). As this drain runs down to the old wharf, work on the bridge should immediately stop until the full impact of the structure is revealed.

Proposal:

My view is that a Bypass be built. It could be along Pitt Town Road, Pitt Town Bottoms Road, and then crossing the river to join Wilberforce Road. Light traffic is allowed on the bridge after some restoration work, traffic turning into The Terrace. Then the Square could be fully restored to allow full use in its original state. The barrel drain recently unearthed would be fully exposed and be a major draw card for tourism. Ideally, the level of a Bypass bridge be at 11 metres (AHD) and the Wilberforce Road where the bridge joins it's be round to 11 metres. This would give significant flood immunity to the north side of the River. Windsor would flourish and be a tourism destination.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Paine