

INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Windsor Bridge Replacement Project Upper House Inquiry

Submission In Support Of The Project

I have lived on the western side of the Hawkesbury River for approximately 10 years, and I regularly use the Windsor Bridge for access to Windsor, approaching via Freemans Reach Rd.

It is abundantly clear that the current bridge is unsuitable for its current purpose; that being, safe passage across the Hawkesbury River for all types of traffic to and from north of Windsor Bridge. Both sides of the argument agree.

The condition of the current bridge is poor.

Heavy vehicles cannot pass on the bridge at more than walking pace (though regularly heavy vehicles completely stop waiting to cross).

Outside of peak hour, heavy vehicles must slow down significantly from the north approach to navigate the bend safely.

The intersection at Wilberforce Rd and Freemans Reach Rd is downright dangerous.

The common argument that a bypass should be built has many flaws. It is my belief that these flaws make it impossible to consider cancelling the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project and building a bypass.

Therefore, I believe the Windsor Bridge replacement is the only viable option.

Economic Impact Of A Bypass

A bypass, by its very nature, bypasses the Windsor CBD. Windsor CBD is struggling and has been for many years. Statistically, approx. thirty percent of south bound traffic going over Windsor Bridge, is going into Windsor.

The impact of a bypass, wherever it may go, would be that it suddenly becomes easier, quicker and therefore more attractive to shop at Richmond or Rouse Hill.

It is often argued that there are multiple examples in NSW of townships thriving after bypasses have been built. This is true, but the bypasses sighted as evidence are rural/regional towns and cities that have highway bypasses.

Highway trade accounts for a significant portion of the recovery of these towns. Sadly, I do not believe this would be the case in Windsor.

Windsor is a metropolitan town, with multiple options for consumers. I doubt any of these thriving bypassed towns competes with medium or large trading options like Richmond or worse, Rouse Hill.

One can only conclude that a significant number of the thirty percent of traffic with Windsor as the destination, would travel to another destination. A bypass would be the death of the Windsor CBD.

Impracticalities Of Building A Bypass

A bypass is a significantly bigger project than a replacement bridge.

A bypass requires securing a corridor on which to build this significant piece of infrastructure. There is no way to avoid compulsory acquisition, no matter the route.

Compulsory acquisitions are time consuming and expensive. Not to mention the potentially unfair treatment of residents/landowners.

Wherever a bypass went, there is a significant risk that the remaining residents will have their quality of life diminished. These residents did not choose to move near an arterial road, but would have one forced upon them.

There has always been an arterial road through Windsor, so there is no unfairness involved with replacing the bridge.

It would take many years to determine a route for a bypass, complete feasibility studies, secure a corridor (incl. acquisitions) and resolve undoubted protests & potential legal action. All prior to even commencing construction.

This is seriously time consuming and likely to be greater than ten years.

How long do the residents of the Hawkesbury have to wait for a safe crossing? Presently, the only alternative is to detour to North Richmond, which has its own traffic issues.

This project should have been finished years ago.

Replacing the bridge does not prevent a third crossing being constructed in the future.

Historical Significance Of Thompson Square

Thompson Square has some historical significance. Nobody denies that, however this is less important to most residents than opposition groups would have you believe.

I believe all due care is being taken to ensure that the impact on Thompson Square is minimised. In fact, rather fortunately, the project will deliver a broader square, closer in size to its original configuration. The new square will be more aesthetically pleasing, and usable for the public. You only have to look at the plans to realise that.

Thompson Square has always had an arterial road through it, it seems silly to argue for the project to be halted because they don't want an arterial road to go where there already is an arterial road.

Conclusion

Although this replacement bridge may not be a solution that suits everybody, it is the only viable option.

There are unwanted economic consequences for a bypass, it will also be time consuming and expensive. The people of Hawkesbury do not want to wait.

Unfortunately, the political protests surrounding this project have significantly muddied the waters. I trust that this inquiry will see through the nonsense, and realise that although the vocal minority want this project halted, Option 1 was, and is, the only realistic option.