

55 Ogden Road  
Oakville NSW 2765

17 December, 2012

Submission to the RMS EIS regarding  
Proposed new Bridge at Windsor

Like many concerned residents of the Hawkesbury, I have been dismayed by the State Governments' position of supporting the current proposal for the construction of a new bridge over the Hawkesbury River at Windsor, adjacent to the existing bridge.

As a life-long and 5<sup>th</sup> generation resident of the Hawkesbury, I am passionately committed to the preservation of the unique historical character and beauty that the district has to offer and, in particular, in the area around Thompson Square at Windsor. Sadly these sentiments do not appear to be shared by the NSW Government or the bureaucrats who are advising them on best possible outcomes.

While I fully support the need for a new bridge, it beggars belief that the current plan is being proposed as the appropriate alternative, when the opportunity exists to come up with a solution that will benefit both current and future generations, whilst preserving and enhancing the heritage aspects of Thompsons square.

Apart from the complete disregard for the heritage implications of the current plan, the other main issue is, clearly, the long overdue need to divert the ridiculous volume of traffic that has to travel through the top end of Windsor each day. This traffic volume will not be diminished in any way by the adoption of the Governments current plan.

I visited the public display on this plan at the Windsor marketplace last Saturday, December 8, 2012 and took the opportunity to raise these issues and my concerns with the RMS staff in attendance. Predictably they followed their standard marketing script, attempting to extol the virtues of the current plan and to convince me that we will all be better off.

When I questioned them on how their claim of improved traffic flow under their proposal can be demonstrated, their response was that this would be achieved by having new lights at the top of George Street, synchronized with the existing lights in Macquarie Street. I told them this was bunkum. I asked if any of them had ever sat in their car at McGrath's hill at around 5 pm on any week day trying to get to Windsor and, if they had, how could they not feel that the priority must be to divert the traffic away from Thompsons Square, not to attempt to 'manage' it in some futile way by synchronizing traffic lights ?. My questioning was met with blank stares.

I thought at this stage that a different tack was needed, so I asked them how their heritage consultants could ever have supported the current proposal or regarded it as being appropriate, compared to the other options that provided for heavy traffic volumes to be taken away from the main township area completely. Again blank stares.

I have since learned that the Government has classified the new bridge as a project of "State Significance". This sounds really impressive, but what it really means is that projects so designated are, in fact, exempt from heritage considerations. How very convenient. I am certain the current plan would not be supported by any responsible heritage consultant – and I understand that this was the case in regard to this proposal. Sadly these crucial considerations do not appear to be a part of the final decision making process.

My conversation with the RMS representatives was concluded with their suggestion that if I didn't like the plan then I should take it up with my local representatives and with Council. I reminded them that it would be ambitious indeed to expect a sympathetic hearing from the current Liberal dominated Council or our Liberal State and Federal representatives.

In many ways I found the attitude of these government representatives to be patronising and dismissive, and without any sensitivity to or concern about the heritage implications of what they are proposing.

Lets cut to the bottom line – this is not about preserving our heritage or environment, or about showing any real concern for the district and its current or future residents. It's all about a cash-strapped State Government looking for the cheapest possible option, without any regard for their responsibilities to the community they serve, or to future generations - and be damned with the consequences.

The other options that allowed for a crossing either further upstream or downstream of the existing bridge, which allow for high volume traffic to be diverted around town and for Thompsons square to be preserved and enhanced for public use and for the benefit of future generations, is a much better way to go.

The extra costs of these options should not be seen as the sole deterrent if the decision makers have the courage to adopt a more visionary approach to finding a more sustainable and longer-term solution.

In many ways the current proposal reminds me of how close we came to losing the historic Rocks area of Sydney back in the 70's due to a State Government at the time hell bent on mindless development at the expense of our communities and our heritage. Once it is gone, it can never be recovered. Perhaps we need more of a Jack Munday approach to dealing with this current situation.

A final reminder to our elected representatives at the Federal, State and Local Government levels. You have all been elected to your positions with the prime

responsibility to represent and promote the best interests of the communities you serve. Please start doing that by rejecting this outrageous proposal and, in so doing, make a positive contribution to the preservation of a unique and irreplaceable part of Australia's colonial history. If you have the courage to do that, you will be able to look back on your political careers with pride, rather than shame.

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