

**Submission
No 254**

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

Name: Mr Anthony Reynolds

Date received: 27 January 2018

The Director,
Portfolio Committee No. 5,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
Sydney NSW 2000.

Re: Inquiry into the Windsor Bridge replacement project

Submitted by:

Anthony P. Reynolds

January 27, 2018

Dear Director,

I object to the project because I believe it will do irreparable damage to the Thompson Square Heritage Precinct and the township of Windsor and on its own will do little to improve traffic flow through Windsor in the near term and nothing in the long term.

I have been involved with the CAWB protest for the last four and a half years and have lived in Thompson Square for the past two years, prior to that I lived at Lower Portland for thirty years, driving over the Windsor Bridge to Windsor for work and shopping. I am familiar with the traffic issues and see Thompson Square at its best and worst every day.

As part of the CAWB protest I do a number of shifts at the protest tent through the week mostly from 2:00am to 6:00am. This allows me to see Thompson Square and the surrounding roads during its quietest period, and through its busiest periods I see it from my front door.

Through the week there are tourists and individual visitors to Thompson Square and at the weekends in fine weather the park fills with visitors and their families who have come to see this place and quite often take advantage of the nearby cafes and restaurants, and of course the Macquarie Arms Hotel that was built in 1815, there have been suggestions that the Shipley Crozier building on the corner of George and Bridge streets may be older than that. Apart from the trees in the park and the shelters in front of the food outlets a visitor has a clear view of the old buildings and places surrounding this location and would have little trouble absorbing the atmosphere of the place. During the four and a half years the CAWB tent protest has been running thousands of people have visited the tent and thousands have signed letters of protest, very many of them have come from outside the area attracted by the history of Windsor and its surrounds. Quite a large number like to make regular weekend day trips to Thompson Square just because it's a nice place to come to and parents can tell their children a little bit about the history of the colony. Thompson Square is the historic heart of Windsor.

The road cutting that was put in place from the George and Bridge streets intersection directly to Windsor Bridge in the 1930's divided the Thompson Square park area into two sections, the smaller lower section and the much larger upper section. The lower section is accessible from Windsor

wharf and from Old Bridge Street, however Old Bridge Street follows the natural contour of the land and is oppressively steep thus only allowing access to the more mobile person or to motor vehicles and virtually isolating the lower section from the amenities adjacent to the upper park area.

The upper park area benefited by having the steepness of the natural contour much reduced by the spoil from the cutting being used to fill in the lower area of this section, raising the level and making the entire upper park area available to all.

The other advantage of the cutting is that traffic leaving the George and Bridge Streets intersection heading towards the existing Windsor Bridge immediately drop below the sight line when looking across the upper park and does not interfere with with the view, it also causes a marked reduction in pollution and traffic noise levels that otherwise directly affect people in that area.

The proposed changes to the Thompson Square Historical Precinct include filling in the road cutting and replacing it with a modern high level buttressed three lane road running between The George and Bridge Streets intersection and the new Windsor Bridge, and between the park area and directly adjacent to the buildings on the eastern side of the square.

The proposal calls for the contour of the newly configured park to revert back to the natural contour of the land and states a 1 in 4 slope will exist in the lower area. As the new road leaves the intersection leading to the new bridge it will be level with the adjacent parkland but then as the ground drops away it will soar over the park exposing people to higher levels of pollution and much increased noise levels. The sloping area appears to cover nearly half the available space with no shelter away from the walls on either sides, that could make the area oppressively hot and useless in summer.

The other side of the proposed new road will be moved much closer to the historic buildings on that side, being separated from them by the width of a footpath and exposing them to greater risk of damage caused by long term traffic pollution and vibration. Also as traffic including heavy vehicles will now be passing directly in front of those buildings it visually separates them from the rest of the square.

This proposed design is not based on a full understanding of the significance of the heritage values of the place, nor on any heritage design principles or conservation policies, on which to base a future design. Therefore it is not mitigating impacts on heritage but an additional impact. (Windsor Bridge Replacement Project. Independent Heritage Review. August 2013).

And from the Heritage Council of NSW: (SSI -4941 WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT – HC LTR FINAL_Dec 2012 x)

It is the view of the Heritage Council that the current project does not meet one of the project objectives, namely: 'To minimise the impact on heritage and the character of the local area.'

The Heritage Council has previously advised that Thompson Square is of crucial importance to the heritage of the State; that Option 1 is likely to have a long term irrevocable and negative impact on Windsor as a whole and Thompson Square in particular; and that Option 1 does not adequately respect the unique history and State heritage significance of this area. The serious and irrevocable heritage impacts of a new Windsor Bridge through Thompson Square mean that the Heritage Council recommends to the Minister for Planning that project SSI - 4951 WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT should be refused on heritage grounds.

I have noticed that in the early hours of the morning there has been an increase in heavy vehicles moving through the Square and across the bridge in both directions, these movements are beginning earlier than they did four years ago. During these early hours the surrounding intersections have very little affect on traffic movements.

As volume increases leading into the morning peak period traffic starts to back up at the Freemans Reach/Wilberforce Road intersection also from the Bridge Street/George Street roundabout which eventually extends back to the Freemans Reach Road and from the Bridge Street/Macquarie Street traffic lights. The roundabout at George Street initially acts as a flow restrictor allowing vehicles stopped at the Macquarie Street lights to clear before before the lights recycle back to red but this effect is eventually overcome by the sheer increase in traffic volume. There is then a continuous line of delayed traffic extending from the Bridge Street/Macquarie Street intersection back along the Wilberforce Road causing substantial delays.

In the afternoon peak period the traffic backs up from the Bridge Street/Macquarie Street intersection on both Macquarie Street and Bridge Street/ Windsor Road. Again this causes long delays in both directions.

The effect on traffic flow caused by these intersections can be easily monitored by viewing the RMS Live Traffic app on a smart phone.

The current Windsor Bridge Replacement Project calls for a roundabout to be installed at the Freemans Reach/Wilberforce Road intersection and the removal of the roundabout at the George Street intersection replacing it with traffic lights. There are no changes proposed for the Bridge Street/Macquarie Street intersection. This will confirm the Macquarie Street intersection as the main bottleneck with respect to traffic flow which can only become worse as traffic flow increases and approaches saturation which is rapidly approaching. This appears to be acknowledged by the RMS as they now propose to mark the new bridge as three lanes, this was not predicted to occur until 2026.

Over the 2012-2017 five year period, while light vehicle movements on Windsor Bridge only increased by 7%, total heavy vehicle movements increased by 48%. Rigid trucks had a 45% increase, while articulated trucks had a 59% increase." 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, pg.4

"It appears the optimum option is some combination between the RMS and the Pearson Wedgewood options which will be able to provide a viable option (3 above) for the next 25 to 50 years and hence not build a new bridge at this stage. Then at some time in the future a bypass can be built which avoids all the damage to property, heritage values etc. So with a relatively modest expenditure the bridge can be serviceable for the next 50 years within which time an alternative route will have been identified and agreed." Report on Structural Condition of the existing Windsor Bridge, pg.31

"RMS does state however that 'an alternative route around Windsor may be considered in the future depending on growth in traffic numbers and local congestion.' In our opinion, such a route should be considered as part of this project." Cambray Consulting, Windsor Bridge

Replacement Project, Traffic Review of Information Provided by the Applicant (Roads and Maritime Services), Prepared for NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 15 August 2013 - pg.24

I feel the only responsible long term solution is to refurbish and retain the existing Windsor Bridge and upgrade the adjacent intersections while planning a town bypass for **through traffic which in an RTA Option Report in August 2011 was estimated at 70% of traffic crossing the Windsor Bridge.** Owing to the changes that have occurred in the type of movements since that date I would estimate the through traffic to now be of a higher percentage.

Thank you for allowing me to make this submission.

Anthony P. Reynolds