



WINDSOR BRIDGE

Over the Hawkesbury River

Report on community consultation

NOVEMBER 2009

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Table of contents

1.	Background	3
2.	Project status.....	4
3.	Key issues	4
	3.1 Location of the options being considered	5
4.	Consultations	6
	4.1 Stakeholder and community meetings	7
	4.2 Shopping centre promotion/community information session	8
	4.3 RTA Website	8
	4.4 Advertising	8
5.	Submissions	9
	5.1 Stakeholder groups	9
	5.2 Issues raised	10
	5.3 Preferences indicated.....	11
6.	Key issues raised for each option by the community	12
7.	Agency issues	15
	7.1 Hawkesbury City Council	15
	7.2 Heritage Council	16
	7.3 Maritime NSW	16
	7.4 National Trust of Australia (NSW)	16
8.	Key questions and answers from the community	17
	Attachment A – photos featuring main parts of the Windsor township.	

I Background

The Windsor Bridge is located over the Hawkesbury River on Windsor Road, Windsor. It is the oldest existing crossing of the Hawkesbury River. Windsor is located 57km northwest of Sydney within the Hawkesbury City Council local government area (LGA). Windsor Road is located within the floodplain of the Hawkesbury River and the town is located on the ridge above the Hawkesbury River on the southern bank.

The existing road corridor is classified as an arterial road and has characteristically heavy and continuous traffic flows. The number of vehicles using the road has steadily increased.

The bridge was originally built with a timber deck on cast iron piers in 1875. Over the years the bridge has undergone many alterations including raising the bridge by 2.4 metres and adding a pier in 1897. The timber deck, abutment and the same pier were replaced by reinforced concrete in 1920 and a footpath was added on the downstream side in 1968.

The bridge is 143 metres long and 6.1 metres wide. It carries an average of 18,000 vehicles per day.

While the existing structure is still considered safe for general traffic, parts of the bridge are now 134 years old.

In June 2008 the NSW Government announced it had committed \$25 million to replace Windsor Bridge. The announcement followed investigations by the RTA into the condition of the existing bridge and the options for rehabilitation or replacement.

A community update outlining the nine options to rehabilitate or replace the existing bridge was released to the community in July 2009. The community update invited comments on the nine options. A shopping centre promotion was held on Saturday 25 July 2009 at the Riverview Shopping Centre Windsor a week prior to the community workshop. A community workshop was then held at Windsor Central Library on Saturday 1 August 2009 where members of the project team were available to answer questions and receive feedback.

This report documents community feedback received in response to the nine options presented to the community.

2 Project status

The RTA investigated the condition of the existing bridge and the options for rehabilitation or replacement.

The options considered are:

- Option 1 – high level bridge 35 metres downstream of existing bridge.
- Option 2 – low level bridge 35 metres downstream of existing bridge.
- Option 3 – high level bridge 10 metres upstream of existing bridge.
- Option 4 – along Macquarie Street via Baker Street upstream from existing bridge.
- Option 5 – along Macquarie Street via Kable Street upstream from existing bridge.
- Option 6 – begins at a new T-intersection on Windsor Road, north of Pitt Town Road, travels east by a new bridge/viaduct across South Creek parallel to the east of Palmer Street downstream from existing bridge.
- Option 7 – from Windsor Road along Court and North streets and then along Palmer Street upstream from existing bridge.
- Option 8 – Pitt Town Road, upstream from existing bridge.
- Option 9 – refurbish existing bridge.

After the RTA conducted its initial investigations to either rehabilitate or rebuild the existing bridge it was apparent that each option impacted heritage, safety, traffic efficiency, flooding and the community's needs for the area.

In July 2009 the community was invited to provide their comments on the proposed nine options. A community information session was held to answer questions and receive feedback on 1 August 2009.

Further studies are being undertaken prior to short listing the number of options to be considered. Once a short list of options has been determined the community will be consulted again to provide further feedback so a preferred option for Windsor Bridge can be chosen.

3 Key issues

Community feedback indicated key concern about:

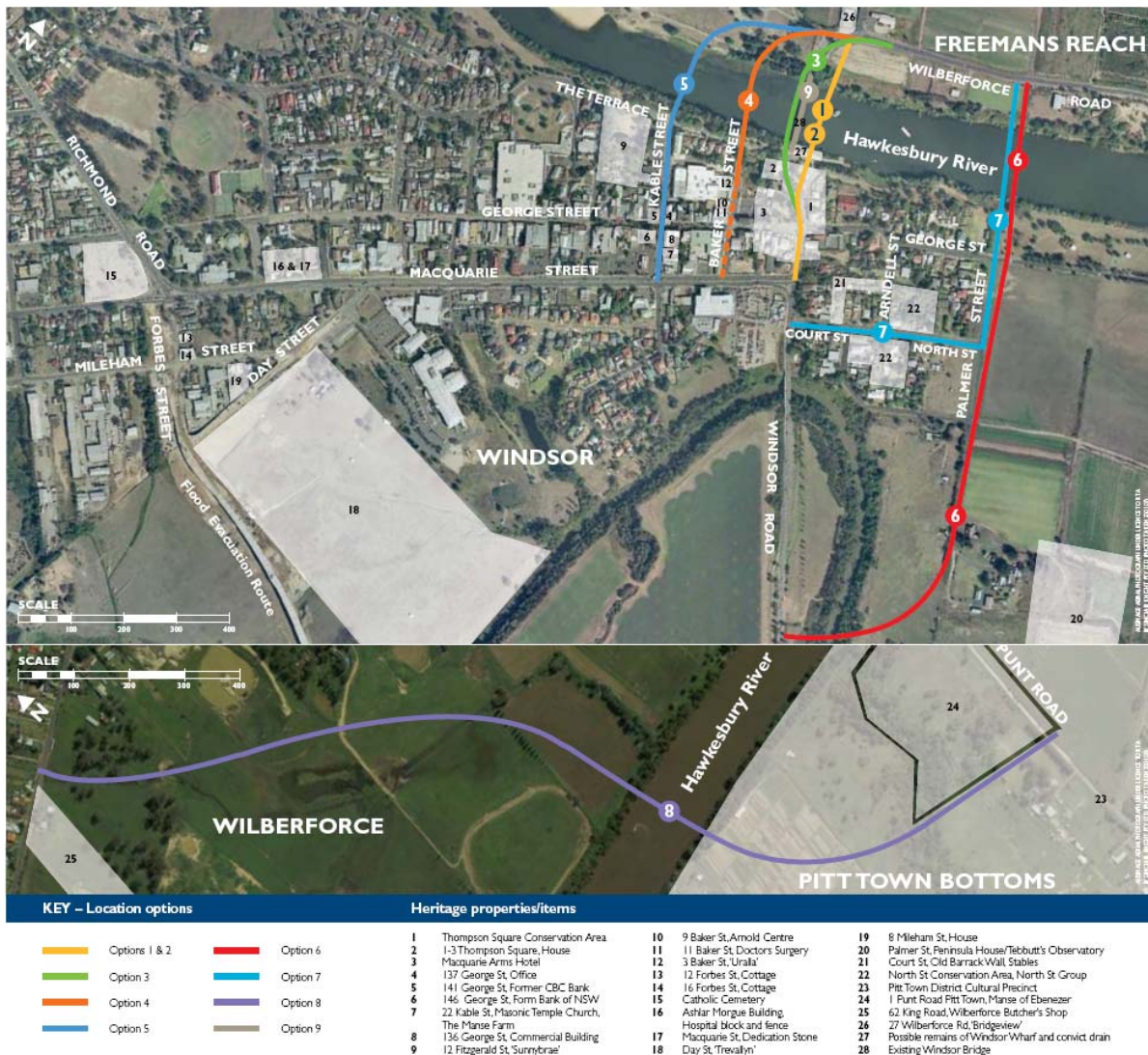
- Heritage and character of the local area.
- Local community needs such as pedestrian and cyclist connections, recreational space, loss of business and increased noise and pollution for the area.
- Traffic and transport issues.
- Floods.
- The safety for motorists for any of the above options.
- Cost effectiveness.

Government agencies provided feedback by written submissions. Their key concerns included:

- The least amount of impact to the Windsor township.
- Several items listed on the State Register are situated in the vicinity of the various bridge route options, including the extremely significant Thompson Square.
- River is extensively used by recreational boaters engaged in high-speed towing and other activities.

Separate meetings were held with government agencies and key stakeholders who had an interest in the project.

3.1 Location of the options being considered

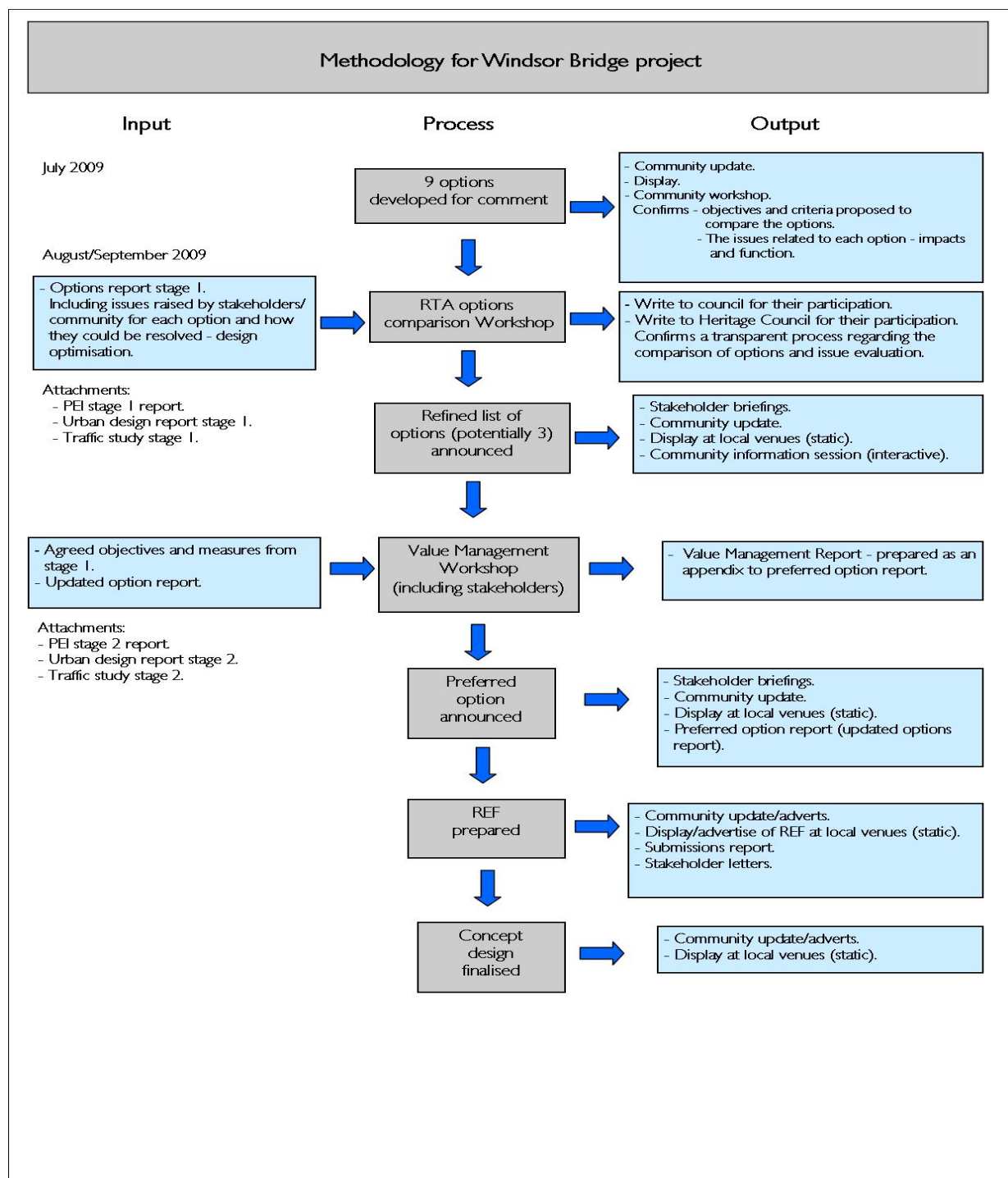


4 Consultations

Overview of consultation activities

A community involvement plan was prepared. The RTA's objectives being to create stakeholder and community awareness of the project and to understand stakeholder and community issues, values and concerns that relate to each of the nine options.

A methodology flowchart was prepared to show the decision making process, including consultation inputs and the desired outcomes identified for each phase of consultation.



Consultations were undertaken:

- To create stakeholder and community awareness of the project.
- To understand stakeholder and community issues, values and concerns that relate to each of the nine options.
- To seek community ideas.
- To advise potentially directly affected stakeholders of the project.
- To gain further knowledge of the local area and any other historic item not identified to date by the project team.

4.1 Stakeholder and community meetings

Meetings were held between the project team and various groups and organisations between July and August 2009, including:

- Community groups.
- Local business group in Windsor.
- Hawkesbury City Council.
- Heritage Council, Department of Planning.
- Maritime NSW.

All meetings were documented in the project's issues register.

4.2 Shopping centre promotion/Community information session – July/August 2009

A shopping centre display which was manned by two RTA staff was held a week prior to the community workshop in order to raise community awareness of the project and to promote/invite the community to the workshop for the following week.

- Shopping centre display at Riverview Shopping Centre Windsor, Saturday 25 July 2009 – 140 people visited the stand.
- Community information session held at Windsor Central Library, Saturday 1 August 2009 – 90 people attended.

Members of the project team were available at each venue to answer questions and receive feedback. Conversations with members of the community were on a one-to-one basis, enabling the RTA to answer questions and take on board issues and/or suggestions for each of the nine options considered.



Community workshop 1 August 2009.

4.3 RTA Website

The RTA's project website was regularly updated with project information and the community was invited to provide feedback.

4.4 Advertising

A newspaper advertisement appeared in the Hawkesbury Gazette on 15 July 2009 and the Hawkesbury Courier on 16 July 2009. The advertisement invited the community to attend a community workshop. Written comments were invited on the options.

5 Submissions

Approximately 136 submissions were received on the nine options. Submissions were made by the local council, local business groups, individual members of the community and community groups.

Representatives from Hawkesbury City Council, Heritage Branch of Department of Planning and Maritime NSW attended meetings with the project team and provided formal submissions on the options.

Various representative groups and stakeholders submitted feedback and submissions on the proposal. This included a petition generated by the Windsor Residents First Group.

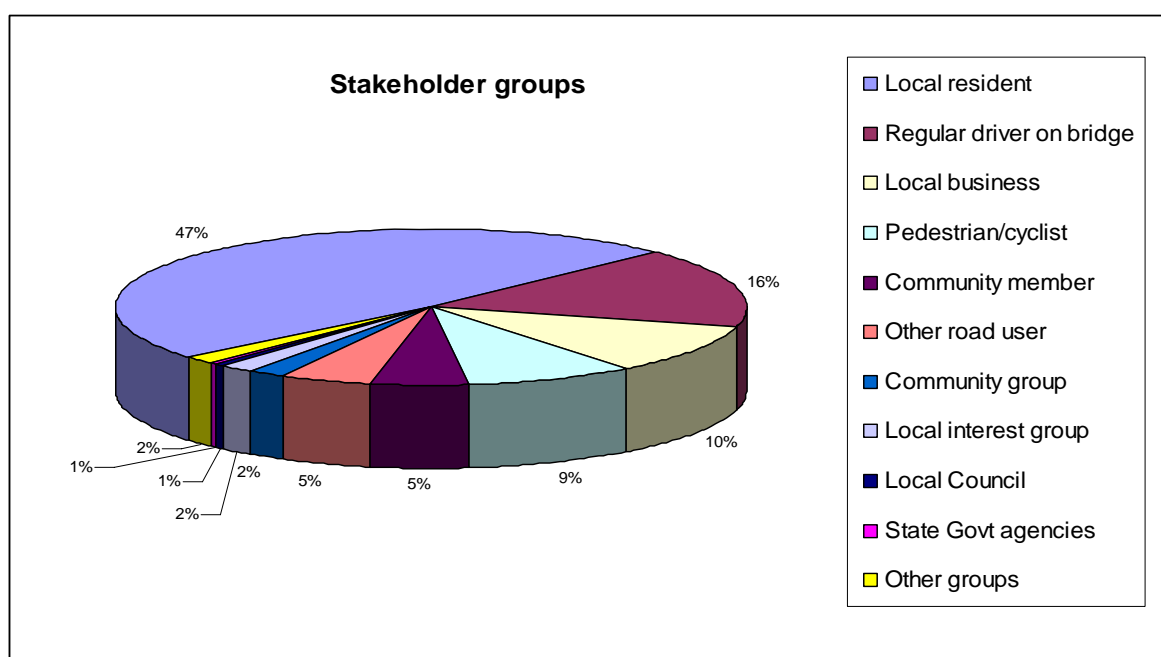
The table 5.1 and figure 5.1 below shows how these groups and community members identified themselves. Most people identified themselves as belonging to more than one category.

5.1 Stakeholder groups

Table 5.1

Stakeholder Group	Percentage
Local resident	47%
Regular driver on bridge	16%
Local business	10%
Pedestrian/cyclist	9%
Community member	5%
Other road user	5%
Community group	2%
Interest group	2%
Local council	2%
State Government agency	1%
Other groups	1%

Figure 5.1



5.2 Issues raised

Prominent topics of discussion regarding impacts included:

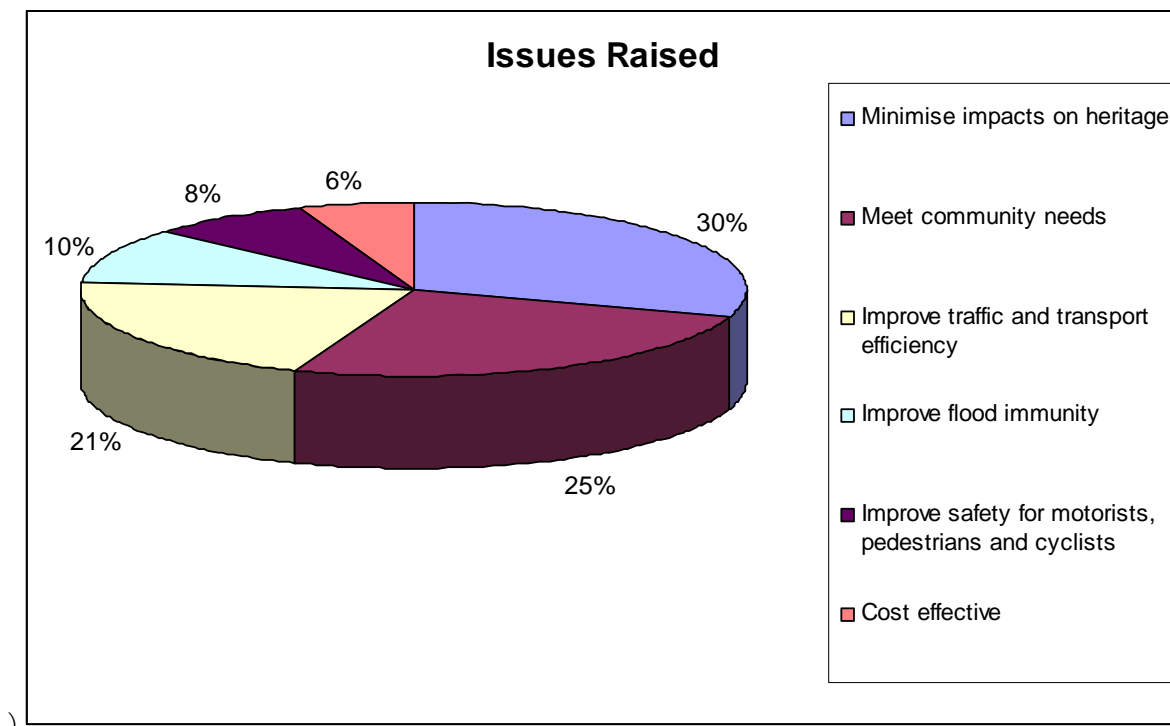
- Heritage and character of the local area.
- Local community needs such as pedestrian and cyclist connection, recreational space, business and shopping environment and noise.
- Traffic and transport issues.
- Floods.
- Improved safety for motorist and pedestrians.
- Cost effectiveness.

The table 5.2 and figure 5.2 below shows prominent issues that are of concern to these stakeholder groups and community members.

Table 5.2

Issues Raised	Percentage
Minimise impacts on heritage	30%
Meet community needs	25%
Improve traffic and transport efficiency	21%
Improve flood immunity	10%
Improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists	8%
Cost effective	6%

Figure 5.2



5.3 Preferences indicated

Table 5.3 below shows where groups and community members indicated a preference for an option and what the most nominated option was. Most people identified their support for more than one option.

The RTA did not request people to nominate a preferred option; as a result some submissions did not include this information. This is important - the data below is not statistically significant. The RTA does not make decisions by vote but by analysing the issues that all groups have and working through the best overall solution.

Table 5.3

Options	Percentage
Option 1 for	40%
Option 2 for	19%
Option 6 for	18%
Option 9 for	9%
Option 8 for	7%
Option 7 for	3%
Option 3 for	2%
Option 4 for	1%
Option 5 for	1%

6 Key issues raised for each option by the community

The following comments were raised from the local community and businesses during the display promotion, community workshop and submissions received.

Although the RTA did not ask people to note their preferred option, most of the 136 submissions expressed a preference for one or more options.

Option 1 and 2 – high level bridge 35 metres downstream of existing bridge

Option 1 and 2 attracted the most comments and given the highest stated preference.

Most raised issues were:

- Potential for the Bridge Street road cutting to be backfilled and landscaped to reinstate the shape of Thompson Square as outlined in the July community update.
- Most direct route from Windsor Road to Freemans Reach Road.
- Opening The Terrace under the bridge would allow vehicle access to Windsor Wharf and the car park.

Followed by:

- Need to maintain the existing connection from the Windsor township to the northern side of the Hawkesbury River, which has been in place since 1875.
- Least disruptive to all existing areas because it follows the existing road corridor.
- Concerns were raised that the current traffic through Thompson Square and across Windsor Bridge is a nightmare for residents due to increased noise, pollution and congestion.
- Improved connection at Freemans Reach Road and Wilberforce Road.
- Would not affect the navigation of vessels.
- Option 2 restricts coach access to Windsor Wharf.

Option 3 – high level bridge 10 metres upstream of existing bridge

Option 3 attracted relatively few comments.

Issues raised were:

- The heritage impact of this option as it encroaches on the Doctor's House and reduces the size of Thompson Square.
- Thompson Square would not be improved by this option, whereas other options provide that opportunity.

Option 4 – along Macquarie Street via Baker Street upstream from existing bridge

Option 4 attracted relatively few comments.

Issues raised were:

- Splits the township in half (severance).
- Impact on the aesthetics and history of the township.
- Interferes with the Windsor retail precinct as the increased traffic along the shopping precinct in Baker Street would reduce pedestrian and parked vehicle safety.
- Will not affect the navigation of vessels provided the span width and height remains to current standards.

Option 5 – along Macquarie Street via Kable Street upstream from existing bridge

Option 5 attracted relatively few comments.

Issues raised were:

- Splits the township in half (severance).
- Impacts on the aesthetics and history of the township.
- Interferes with the Windsor retail precinct as the increased traffic along the shopping precinct in Kable Street would reduce pedestrian and parked vehicle safety.
- Closure of The Terrace would redirect traffic that would bisect the Windsor pedestrian mall.

Option 6 – begins at a new T-intersection on Windsor Road, north of Pitt Town Road

Option 6 attracted the second highest number of comments and was given the second highest stated preference.

Most raised issues were:

- Impacts on a number of residents who live along the route.
- Increased traffic and noise impacts to local residents.
- Motorists using this bypass would not bother to turn off to the Windsor town centre for shopping, resulting in a loss of business for Windsor town centre.

Followed by:

- View expressed that it is preferable to bypass small townships.
- This option is in a low lying area and could be affected by flooding.
- The additional piers in the water would affect the navigation of vessels.
- Possible shadowing from the bridge could affect the boating race course currently used for the Hawkesbury bridge to bridge boat races and other boating events.
- Affects too many heritage items.
- Has the least impact on houses in the area.

Option 7 – from Windsor Road along Court and North streets and then along Palmer Street upstream from existing bridge

Option 7 attracted relatively few comments.

Most raised issues were:

- Significant impact to the North Street Conservation Area and Court House.
- Impacts on a number of residents who live along the route.
- Increased traffic and noise for local residents.
- Motorists using this bypass would not bother to turn off to the Windsor CBD for shopping, resulting in a loss of business for Windsor town centre.

Followed by:

- View expressed that it is preferable to bypass small townships.
- This option is in a low lying area and could be affected by flooding
- Would affect the navigation of vessels.
- Possible shadowing from the bridge could affect the boating race course currently used for the Hawkesbury bridge to bridge boat races and other boating events.

Option 8 – Pitt Town Road, upstream from existing bridge

Option 8 attracted relatively few comments.

Most raised issues were:

- More traffic will be generated on King Road and North Richmond.
- An expensive option as more infrastructure would need to be built due to the distance this option would cover.
- A bypass of Windsor township (a good thing) keeps all traffic well clear of historic Windsor.

Following by:

- Could be considered as a long term solution, dependent on increased population growth and transport needs for the community.
- Possible shadowing from the bridge could affect the boating race course currently used for the Hawkesbury bridge to bridge boat races and other boating events.
- This area is extensively used by recreational boaters engaged in high-speed towing and other activities. No supporting structures or pylons should be established in navigable water.
- Impacts on too much vegetation.
- This option could become a possible flood evacuation route for Wilberforce and Putty Road, a positive outcome.

Option 9 – refurbish existing bridge

Option 9 attracted relatively few comments.

Most raised issues were:

- The existing bridge should be retained for either local traffic or as a pedestrian/cycle path.
- Need to keep the existing bridge but also build a new bridge to bypass the town.
- Windsor is a historical town and minimal change to this beautiful town should be considered.

Followed by:

- The project should cause the least amount of heritage impact on Thompson Square.
- Increased heavy traffic through Windsor would result in danger to pedestrians and create unpleasant smells from vehicles and heavy exhaust fumes.
- This option is the least disruptive to all existing areas and hence it is a more economical option.

7 Agency issues

7.1 Hawkesbury City Council

The Hawkesbury City Council indicated a preference for Option 1 (high level bridge), approximately 35 metres downstream of the existing Windsor Bridge. Their preference is based on:

- Continuation of the Windsor Road corridor, providing a major transport link to the Windsor township and to Freemans Reach Road.
- The proposal provides an improved connection at Freemans Reach Road and Wilberforce Road, which will facilitate orderly traffic movement from both Freemans Reach Road and Wilberforce Road.
- The proposal provides a connection from the Windsor township to the northern side of the Hawkesbury River which has been in place since 1875.
- The proposal providing improved access in the vicinity of The Terrace and a connection of the township to the Windsor Wharf area and Governor Phillip reserve and the provision of safe access for pedestrians and cyclist as part of the Great River Walk.
- The proposal providing flood immunity for the 1:5 year flood event which is a significant improvement on the current deck level and benefit to the community with a link over the Hawkesbury River and increasing the benefits of the newly constructed Flood Evacuation Route.
- The proposal provides access for service vehicles including garbage trucks, cars and coaches under the new bridge to service the Windsor Wharf. This aspect is considered essential as Council is currently proposing to upgrade the wharf at its current location.

Hawkesbury City Council raised concerns relating to the remaining Options 2 to 9, which include:

- Concern that Option 3 would limit possible improvement to Thompson Square.
- Concern that Option 4 and 5 would disaggregate the historic precinct of Windsor and the mall and impact in terms of both aesthetic and historic.
- Concern that Option 6 and 7 would limit river traffic especially for larger vessels to access the Windsor Wharf and restrict usage of Governor Phillip Park during boating events.
- Concern that Option 8 would bring traffic implications through the Pitt Town, North Richmond and Richmond areas during peak periods.
- Concern that Option 9 would bring no improvement to the seagull intersection at Wilberforce Road and Freemans Reach Road intersection.

7.2 Heritage Council

The Heritage Council noted their current preference for Option 9, Option 6 and Option 8.

The Heritage Council raised concerns relating to other options which include:

- Concern that several items listed on the State Register are situated in the vicinity of the various bridge route options, including the extremely significant Thompson Square precinct that was established from 1811.
- Concern that the existing Windsor Bridge could be demolished, as it was built in 1875 and it is the oldest existing structure crossing the Hawkesbury River and included in the RTA's s170 Heritage Register.

7.3 Maritime NSW

Maritime NSW did not indicate a preference for an option.

Maritime NSW raised concerns relating to Option 6, Option 7 and Option 8, which include:

- The river is extensively used by recreational boaters engaged in high-speed towing and other activities.
- Licensed aquatic boating activities which are regularly held in the waters directly adjacent to Governor Phillip Park may be significantly disrupted by these options.
- Possible shadowing effect from the bridge for the boating race course, especially from options 7 and 8.
- Possible restriction of the passage of larger commercial vessels manoeuvring access to their permanent moorings established adjacent to the public wharf at Windsor.

7.4 National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)

The National Trust noted their preference for Option 9 based on:

- No additional impact on Thompson Square. The Thompson Square Precinct was listed by the National Trust on its Register in June, 1975.

The National Trust noted that further consideration and evaluation should also be given to Options 6 and 8 based on:

- The 1975 Classification Report noted that "the centre of Thompson Square is also spoilt by a main road which slices diagonally through it and into a cutting, destroying the visual integrity of the space that was originally intended".
- Reinstate Thompson Square and the original Macquarie vision as part of the improvements of the Hawkesbury crossing at Windsor.

8 Key questions and answers from the community

Where the RTA is currently able to provide responses, we have listed these below.

1.	Why do we need a new bridge?	The structure is in poor condition and nearing the end of its economic life. While the existing structure is still considered safe for general traffic, parts of the existing bridge are now 134 years old.
2.	When will construction of the new bridge start?	At this stage we are considering nine options including the refurbishment of the existing bridge. If the preferred option is to construct a new bridge we expect construction to start in early 2011.
3.	When will the new bridge be completed?	If the preferred option is to construct a new bridge we expect construction to be completed in mid 2012, weather permitting.
4.	What is involved with the refurbishment of the existing bridge?	If the preferred option is to refurbish the existing bridge it will involve replacing the existing bridge deck with substantial modifications to the piers.
5.	Has the RTA got a preferred option?	Currently the RTA has no preferred option. The preferred option will be decided after the community consultation has been completed.
6.	Will the community be consulted before finalising the preferred option?	The next stage will be to refine the number of options to approximately three options. Then the community will be consulted again to provide further feedback so a preferred option for Windsor Bridge can be chosen.
7.	Will there be any changes to the area?	Yes, the extent of any changes will be based on the location of the preferred option. However, if the preferred option is to refurbish the existing bridge there will not be any changes to the area.
8.	Will there be any property acquisition?	Yes, the extent of the property acquisition depends on the location of the preferred option.
9.	Will any properties/buildings be demolished?	It depends on the location of the preferred option.

10.	Will there be any noise during construction?	Yes, however the RTA will use noise-reducing measures during construction.
11.	Will there be any vibration during construction?	Yes, the RTA will monitor environmental impacts on site such as vibration to ensure that there is minimal vibration to properties.
12.	Will there be any affects to the natural environment in the area?	Yes, the extent depends on the location of the preferred option.
13.	Will there be any traffic delays during construction?	It depends on the location of the preferred option.
14.	Will the river be closed to water traffic during construction?	It depends on the location of the preferred option. There will be times when certain parts of the river will be closed to water traffic but this will be negotiated with NSW Maritime and the community will be notified in advance.
15.	What will happen with the old bridge?	The RTA will consider the future of the old bridge after having consulted the community and other interested stakeholders. For the RTA, it is not economically viable to maintain the old bridge. A maintaining Authority or interested party needs to be identified either to maintain the whole bridge or a portion of the bridge.

Attachment A

Thompson Square



Old Bridge Street



The Doctors House



Existing Windsor Bridge

