



Brad Hazzard MP

Minister for Planning & Infrastructure

Minister assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 20 December 2013

WINDSOR TO BENEFIT FROM NEW BRIDGE

The new \$65 million Windsor Bridge, which will reduce traffic congestion and improve road safety, received planning approval today from the NSW Government.

“The 159m long Windsor Bridge will be an important new link between western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Hunter region,” Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard said.

“The Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) proposal went through an extensive and rigorous planning process by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

“Front and centre of my decisions as Planning Minister is that developments are judged on their merits through an independent and transparent planning process.

“Projects will only be approved by me if I am satisfied that they have been properly assessed on their merits - weighing up the social, environmental and heritage and economic impacts.

“The advice from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure is that the Windsor Bridge project is in the public interest and on merit should proceed and I have accepted that advice.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals made a commitment to replace Windsor Bridge and the Government is pleased that now with planning approval it can deliver on that commitment.

Mr Hazzard said the existing bridge was in a poor structural condition, had dangerously narrow lanes for cars and trucks and a 1m wide pedestrian path which was too narrow to be safely used by cyclists.

“Furthermore, the existing bridge is affected by flooding roughly once every two years,” Mr Hazzard said.

“The former NSW Labor government promised to replace the bridge by 2010, but like so many promises they failed to deliver.

“The new bridge will provide safer access across the Hawkesbury River – especially during flood events – and approach roads and intersections will be upgraded to meet modern engineering and road safety standards.

“Locals will also enjoy greatly increased pedestrian and cycle access to the southern foreshore of the river.

“Overall, this bridge represents a very important infrastructure project which will benefit residents of Sydney’s north-west and the surrounding regions.”

NSW Roads and Maritime Services applied to build the new bridge 35m downstream from the existing bridge, which will be pulled down as part of the 20-month project.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure assessment noted the protection of state and local heritage was a key issue raised in public submissions – particularly the impacts on the Thompson Square Conservation Area.

“The NSW Government commissioned several independent reviews to specifically look at traffic, bridge engineering and heritage related impacts,” Mr Hazzard said.

Stringent conditions to minimise or plan for heritage impacts requires:

- RMS to appoint a specialist heritage manager and heritage consultant team to oversee construction of the project and report regularly to the Government;
- A Strategic Conservation Management Plan, to include the development of heritage design principles to retain the heritage significance of the Thompson Square Conservation Area;
- An Archaeological Investigation Program including archaeological testing and geophysical investigations at the site;
- A Detailed Salvage Strategy for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Heritage and;
- The submission of an Urban Design and Landscape Plan, to be prepared in consultation with the NSW Heritage Council and Hawkesbury City Council, to appropriately integrate the new bridge and supporting infrastructure into the Thompson Square Conservation Area.

Additionally, planning approval requires nearby intersections to be upgraded to deliver traffic improvements.

“We are confident that the balance is right and that the new Windsor Bridge is in the public interest and will result in immediate and long term traffic benefits for the region,” Mr Hazzard said.