

## RIVER STREET BRIDGE

At the risk of stating the bleeding obvious, the vast bulk of people in Dubbo see the location of the new third bridge as flawed, or simply said, in the wrong location.

My view, as is the view of Council, is that the ring road should be a priority before any move to build a bridge at River Street. And frankly, a bridge at River Street does not address either the flooding issues or the local traffic issues that are affecting interstate trucks and traffic in Dubbo.

Locals know that the Newell Highway between Troy Bridge and River Street on the Newell Highway is flood prone. The RMS's answer to this problem is to still use River Street but divert in the other direction up Bourke Street up to Yarrandale Road and re-join the Newell, past the abattoirs and saleyards at Troy Junction. They are also proposing another silly move in West Dubbo where their plan falls short in addressing the flooding issue.

What locals are particularly annoyed about is that the River Street Bridge plan does nothing to reduce the amount of traffic on Whylandra Street. Indeed the intersection at Hungry Jacks will still be congested. They also rub salt into the wound by saying traffic lights at this intersection will fix the congestion as opposed to the current roundabout. Nevertheless, by building traffic lights they intend on taking away the parking in front of the Victoria Street shops.

This plan is now becoming beyond a joke. It's simply absurd.

However, some new developments give us a small chance of re-negotiating the plan with the State Government.

Firstly, we now have a new State Member, who isn't as politically invested in the plan as what the previous MP was.

Secondly, there has been a change in Regional Roads Minister. No longer do we have a coastal minister from far away, we have Paul Toole, the Member for Bathurst who many regard as one of the more capable ministers within the government. Being a former mayor, Paul understands local government concerns and is very cognisant of community concerns.

The other great hope I have is that there has been a total reorganisation of roads and transport government agencies in the NSW Government. Instead of a Transport Minister and Roads Ministries, the department has been merged and the two ministers will take on the role of Roads and Transport Minister and Regional Roads and Transport Minister. What makes this arrangement significant is that there will be a new guard in the transport and roads bureaucracy. I'm hoping that any new faces appointed are more sympathetic to the concerns of locals.

As mayor, my plan is to now start a meaningful dialogue with the new guard in the state government.

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