



CEO  
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SYDNEY 2000

## Proposal to demolish Glebe Island Bridge ignores strategic links

It is economically inept, environmentally unsustainable and culturally insensitive to demolish the Glebe Island Bridge. The asset provides future opportunity that has not been considered in any analysis so far.

The Glebe Island Bridge is a vital link in Sydney's transport system for it can provide low level city access for cycle, pedestrian and public transport. The Cost Benefit Analysis Report has relied upon current cycle and pedestrian use of the ANZAC Bridge for its calculation of transport benefit. It has not projected use of Glebe Island Bridge as a low level safe alternative, which is likely to induce considerably increased demand. Increased cycle and pedestrian traffic is noted by Transport NSW in its **City Access Strategy** as directly economically beneficial to Sydney and NSW. It shows that safe pedestrian and cycle ways induce demand, if they interconnect with the transport network. In further detailing the **NSW Long Term Transport Plan** it prominently mentions increased pedestrian and cycle access as providing substantial economic benefits, The Glebe Island Bridge is a vital potential feeder link to the network of transport options. The City of Sydney, Leichhardt Municipal Council and the community in its submissions to the Bays Precinct Taskforce have all emphasised the need to retain this Bridge as low level access for cycle, pedestrian and public transport.

The Glebe Island Bridge has been recommended for inclusion on the State Heritage Register by the NSW Heritage Council. "The swing bridges [designed by engineer Percy Allan]... at Pyrmont and Glebe Island are among the structures standing as monuments to his skill."<sup>1</sup> Through a trick of timing and geography, the former has been declared a National Engineering Landmark; the latter, despite its LEP listing, has suffered years of neglect. It is this neglect that now brings RMS to propose demolition. And yet the difference in the cost of retaining or demolishing the bridge is marginal, and that is without assigning any value to heritage or embodied energy. It is a further abrogation of duty for the very agency which failed to maintain this wonderful heritage link to now propose its demolition.

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<sup>1</sup> Percy Allan (1861-1930) by Arthur Corbett, Australian Dictionary of Biography, v7 (MUP), 1979

Glebe is a human-scale, coherent and largely complete 19thC townscape which is listed on the Register of the National Estate and Classified as an Urban Conservation Area by the National Trust.

The demand for pedestrian, cycle and public transport is rising at the same time that demand for car travel is reducing and the NSW Government has long term plans for linking the various Sydney radial roads. With sensitive adaption the Glebe Island Bridge can offer cyclists and pedestrians a chance to remove themselves from the deleterious high and constant traffic noise levels and the exhaust fumes which pervade the ANZAC Bridge walkway. It should also provide trams and sensitive disabled access. It is a policy oddity therefore to propose obliterating a vital public link to the network of city access.

The Glebe Society strongly supports retention of the Glebe Island Bridge because:

- it can be a low level cycle, pedestrian and public transport link to the City;
- it is culturally sensitive;
- its significant heritage value has been acknowledged by the Heritage Council;
- no effective values have been assigned to these factors nor embodied energy;
- the true opportunity cost of demolition has not been economically considered;
- the true benefits of retention have not been economically considered.

There are relatively few commercial craft that use the Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays. This will be lessened when the Hansen Concrete Plants are moved to Glebe Island. Bridge opening times could be easily managed for the fishing fleet, ferries and the large pleasure yachts. Further action should be delayed until there is a full public inquiry that examines the contributions the Glebe Island Bridge can make to Sydney's transport network and amenity.

Yours Truly

John Gray  
President