



Funding for a new crossing of the Hawkesbury River

Description

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The North Richmond Bridge, built 1905. Photo: The author

June 7th 2021 Update: This morning the Prime Minister and the Premier announced that funding for this project has been lifted to \$500 million. The NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance said that the new bridge will be 6m higher than the current bridge. The funding will be 80% from the Federal Government and 20% from the NSW Government. This is tremendously good news, along with confirmation that the project will not dump traffic into the already-congested heart of North Richmond but rather bypass North Richmond and join Bells Line of Road at Crooked Lane. This map has been circulating this morning as a *preferred* (note: *not* final) route.

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I note that Susan Templeman the Labor Federal MP has chimed in pre-emptively this morning to claim credit for this announcement. I thought my remarks on that question I made two years ago remain just as relevant today.

Original 2-4-2019 post:

Yesterday, the Federal Liberal government committed \$200 million to build a new road crossing of the Hawkesbury River.

This is tremendously exciting news, but some commentary I've seen is misleading about about who to thank and where we go from here.

The need for traffic congestion relief for residents west of the river has been understood and acknowledged for years. A walk through the timeline will be instructive.

In **2011**, the newly elected Liberal State government commissioned a study, which [delivered its "Long Term Options Report" in September 2012](#) and canvassed a number of options. These included:

- Amplifying the current bridge to three lanes and employing a contraflow arrangement morning and evening.
- Constructing a new two-lane bridge immediately downstream to provide an extra two lanes, either at the same level as the current bridge, or somewhat further downstream and at a higher level to provide 1:20yr flood immunity.

Each of these options would ultimately increase traffic through both Richmond and North Richmond and would require substantial amplification to roadworks between the Bosworth St intersection in Richmond, and the Grose Vale Road intersection in North Richmond.

In 2011, the then Labor Federal government pledged a paltry \$2M — money that did not appear in the budget or the forward estimates until 2015. The [then Liberal Macquarie MP Louise Markus drew attention to this](#), saying

“(It’s) another empty promise that may never eventuate. Heavy peak traffic on Grose Vale Road, Terrace Road and Bells Line of Road leading down towards the M7 causes significant congestion around the Richmond bridge. It takes sometimes more than an hour for people, once they reach North Richmond, to cross the bridge to Richmond on the way to work, and the same can happen in the evening.”

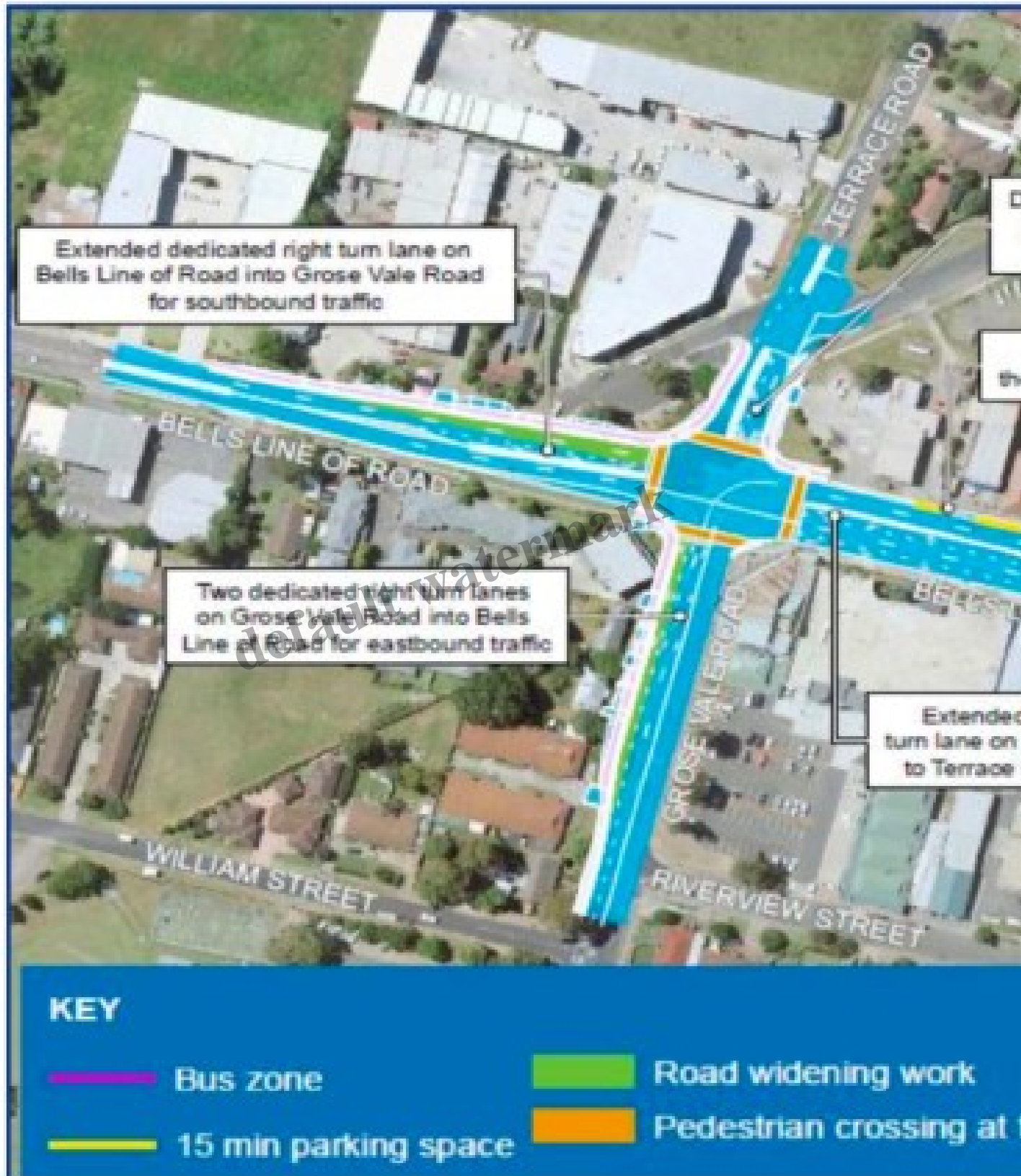
By August **2014**, the Federal Liberal-National government was in position to advance the issue. [Louise Markus told the House of Reps](#):

The provision of safer, more efficient roads to regional Australia is a priority of this government. One such issue needing to be addressed was the Richmond Bridge ... This bridge has experienced significant increased traffic pressure over recent years. Labor failed to deliver on this committed project, but I have fought to see Richmond and North Richmond receive the approved infrastructure that the community deserves.

For several years, planning by the federal government and the New South Wales coalition government has been underway to cater for increased traffic around the Richmond Bridge. The city-centric previous Labor government short-changed regional Australia by cutting \$500 million in regional funding. **I am pleased to acknowledge the coalition government has committed \$18 million of total funding for the Richmond Bridge and its approaches from 2013-14 through to 2018-19**

Meanwhile, the State Liberal Government got on with the job of using these funds to [improve a range of issues](#) affecting traffic flow along Bells Line of Road, with this graphic from an [October 2018 RMS newsletter](#) showing the works around the intersection, but which does not show extensive improvements at the intersection of Old Kurrajong Rd / Yarramundi Lane.

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By the 2018 State Budget, our local MP and State Treasurer Dominic Perrottet [was able to pledge \\$25 million dollars](#) of State money to do detailed planning for a new river crossing ([\\$7m of which](#) was in the 2018-2019 FY). This is what proper collaboration between State and Federal governments looks

like.

I am agnostic on the question of whether the bridge should be a straight duplication of the current bridge, or should be located elsewhere. I'm wary of increasing congestion in North Richmond and Richmond. Council is in the process of finalising a detailed Regional Traffic Study. The process of choosing a site for the bridge and the support roads that will lead to it should be data-driven, as well as acutely mindful of the effects on our heritage towns.

Against this backdrop, the only missing piece, and by far the largest one, was funding for the bridge itself. And it's arrived.

When the announcement was made yesterday, you should realise it has come off the back of a decade of advocacy from Liberal representatives — Local, State and Federal, as well as a lot of dedicated members of the community.

[State Pols](#)

Building the roads and rail of the future helped Premier Gladys Berejiklian to be re-elected and today the Prime Minister is hoping to copy her vote-winning strategy. #9News | <http://9News.com.au>

Posted by [9 News Sydney](#) on Monday, 1 April 2019

All your Local Liberal Councillors have advocated for the funding for an extra crossing — [especially Sarah Richards, now the Federal Candidate for Macquarie, who has knocked on the door of the State and Federal government doggedly.](#)



Sarah Richards for Macquarie

12 hours ago

A visual journey of the LIBERAL'S advocacy and SUCCESS deliver the Third Crossing of the Hawkesbury River for 10 months and we got \$200 million in tonight's Federal What a win for Macquarie residents!



These kinds of infrastructure projects are possible when governments balance their budgets and grow the economy. No one argues that they are necessary, but it takes years of planning.

So how did Labor react, after years of neglect on infrastructure? They fell over themselves to say they would match the funding.

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Susan Templeman MP

Yesterday at 14:04 · 🌐

A Federal Labor Government will fund a third
River.

I'll be fighting to ensure this bridge is built with
community, that it meets community needs
for land acquisition.

Thank you to every Hawkesbury resident who
last 10 years. Every letter, every phone call,
conversation has helped to build a case for
important.

COMMUNITY
Labor commits to
Third Cross

It's galling to see this portrayed as some kind of Labor funding announcement, or something that has come as the result of Labor's careful planning for infrastructure and thrift. It's not. And I'll bet that the \$200 million dollar commitment is as unfunded and ephemeral as other announcements they have made over the years. Under the last Labor government in NSW, they had six transport ministers, nine transport plans, announced a dozen new railway lines and delivered just one — the Airport line — the contract for which was inked under the previous Liberal administration.

Susan Templeman, and Labor generally, deserve no credit for this fantastic announcement. This has come off the back of Liberal advocacy, and Liberal budgetary management. \$200 million dollars doesn't fall out of the air, and saying "me too" in its wake with no sign it was ever costed by Labor doesn't represent leadership.

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. North Richmond Bridge
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