

Across the Bridge

Sydney Harbour Bridge Community Update

April 2017

The NSW Government is investing in projects to modernise and improve access to the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Last month we celebrated the 85th anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

On 19 March 1932, the bridge opened to traffic following decades of planning and construction. A lot has changed since the bridge first opened – for one, horses and carts are no longer permitted to cross! – but much has stayed the same.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge remains the centrepiece of Sydney Harbour, a global icon and a vital north south link for our city.

Inside this special edition of Across the Bridge you can read about the history of the bridge and the latest information on projects underway to ensure it continues to evolve to meet the needs of our community long into the future.



Connecting north and south – A view west towards the Sydney Harbour Bridge under construction.

85 years connecting Sydney

On 19 March 1932, NSW Premier, the Honourable John 'Jack' T. Lang cut the ribbon to signify the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The opening was the culmination of eight years of work and decades of planning, with 1,400 workers constructing the bridge at a cost of about 4.2 million Australian pounds. Six million hand-driven rivets hold together the 53,000 tonnes of steel used in the bridge's construction.

Now 85 years young, the bridge supports the travel of an average of 204 trains, more than 160,000 vehicles and 1,900 bikes every day.

A vision for Sydney

Small in stature but grand in vision, Civil engineer, Dr John Job Crew Bradfield (1867–1943), led the design and construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

While long proposed, it took Dr Bradfield's fierce determination and visionary approach to transport and infrastructure to make a cross-harbour bridge a reality.

Dr Bradfield's thesis, titled *'The City and Suburban Electric Railways and the Sydney Harbour Bridge'*, outlined his vision for Sydney, with the bridge linking to the City Circle underground railway which he also designed.

His research and intervention ensured that the iconic 'coathanger' arch design for the Sydney Harbour Bridge was ultimately selected for construction over the earlier preferred suspension and cantilever bridge options.

After leading the design and tender process for the bridge, Dr Bradfield spent eight years supervising its construction and went on to also design and lead the construction of Brisbane's Story Bridge.

The Bradfield highways in Sydney and Brisbane are named in his honour, as well as Bradfield Park in Kirribilli, the Federal Electorate of Bradfield and Bradfield Senior College in St Leonards.



Workers who helped construct the Sydney Harbour Bridge.



Jack Lang cuts the rejoined ribbon to open the Sydney Harbour Bridge after protester Francis de Groot infamously cut the ribbon first. De Groot was later charged and fined five pounds for 'having behaved in an offensive manner in a public place'.

Image from the collection of the State Library of NSW.



Dr Bradfield at a tree planting ceremony in 1931.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge, so long a dream, is today a bold and a practical reality. A triumphant arch of steel, humanising our landscape in the ideals of all true Australians, simplicity, beauty and service.

It was a Big Plan; the thoughts and strivings of many men. Its success lies in the loyalty of Engineers and Workmen to the Ideal of a Big Plan. Inch by inch, step by step, they built the Bridge, until today it is finished, a work of service, a thing of beauty, which will assert itself long after we are gone.

Dr JJC Bradfield, Foreword to *Building the Bridge* by Robert Emerson Curtis, 1933.



Decking suspended from the completed arch while a steamship passes underneath.

Did you know?

The top of the main arch of the bridge rises and falls about 180mm due to changes in temperature.

Ninety six steam locomotives were positioned in various ways to test the load capacity of the bridge.

In 1932, average daily traffic across the bridge was around 11,000 – now it's closer to 200,000.

The top of the arch is 134 metres above sea level with 49 metres clearance for shipping.

The main deck is 49 metres wide and 1,149 metres long.

Hear the tales

The State Library of NSW has joined in the 85th anniversary celebrations of the bridge by releasing its entire collection of unedited historic interviews with the people who built our iconic landmark.

You can listen to the recollections of engineers, riveters, boilermakers, concreters, stonemasons and others in the Library's online collection of interviews. Learn about the engineering challenges, manual work and stories of survival – including the worker who fell from the deck into the harbour during construction and was back on the job two weeks later!

Visit amplify.sl.nsw.gov.au to listen to the incredible historical reflections.

The bridge today



In line with our commitment to undertaking activities in an environmentally responsible manner we again switched off the lights on the Sydney Harbour Bridge for Earth Hour on 25 March.



The Sydney Harbour Bridge was the centrepiece of Sydney Harbour's New Year's Eve fireworks spectacular again this year with more than one million people crowding the shores to welcome 2017.

Sydney Harbour Bridge Southern Toll Plaza Precinct upgrade



Artist's impression of completed Southern Toll Plaza Precinct .

In January, the first of the redundant toll booths were removed from the Southern Toll Plaza Precinct. Work has continued to reconfigure the intersection of York and Grosvenor Streets, install new signage, improve drainage, make adjustments to road levels, plus new asphalt and line marking to realign the traffic and bus lanes.

The project will soon move to Stage 2 which will see changes to the alignment of the site compounds at the southern end. This new alignment will allow us to remove the final remaining toll booths. There will be some changes to southbound traffic flow, and we will provide more information about Stage 2 soon.

Removing the booths

It took about six days to remove the first of the redundant toll booths. You can watch a time lapse video of the removal at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/sydneyharbourbridge.



Traffic continues during work to remove redundant toll booths.

Learn more

Staging plans and animated driver scenarios to demonstrate the path to take over the bridge are available at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/sydneyharbourbridge.



Sample from the animated driver scenarios available online.

Improving access to the bridge

Improving access to the Sydney Harbour Bridge is an important part of modernising and maintaining our iconic structure. Roads and Maritime Services is continuing to plan for improved cyclist access to the bridge and we recently began investigations and detailed planning work to install lifts at the north and south ends of the eastern walkway.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge is a significant heritage item, and we are carefully planning this proposal to minimise any heritage impact. A Review of Environmental Factors for the lift installation is being prepared along with the proposed design. Both are due to go on display for public comment soon.

Further information about how you can make comment on the lift design and Review of Environmental Factors will be available in the coming months.



Artist's impression of the proposed lift at Cumberland Street, The Rocks.



Artist's impression of the proposed lift at Broughton Street, Kirribilli.



Before the bridge – the bridge site looking north over Hickson Road. Left centre is the old fort which was demolished to make way for the bridge.



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Contact

If you have any questions or would like to be included on our mailing list for Sydney Harbour Bridge projects, please contact our Sydney Harbour Bridge Projects team on:

 1800 581 595

 SydneyHarbourBridgeProjects@rms.nsw.gov.au

 rms.nsw.gov.au/shb



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April 2017
RMS 17.150

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