



NORTHBRIDGE  
PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

*Working for the advancement of Northbridge since 1919*

ABN 733 956 702

PO Box 357 Northbridge 2063

April 20 2011

Mr Martin Gormley  
Project Engineer  
Sydney Project Services - Bridge Maintenance Unit  
Roads & Traffic Authority  
Level 9, 27 Argyle St.  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Dear Martin

**Re: Suspension Bridge, Northbridge**

This is in response to your email of April 13 2011, which requested feedback on the preferred name to best reflect the history of the bridge, which RTA mistakenly named Long Gully Bridge. We agree with RTA that the term “Long Gully Bridge” is not appropriate as it has never been used by anyone for the bridge.

This Association has been in operation continuously since 1919. At June 30 2010, the Association had 511 members and we believe that we represent a broad cross-section of Northbridge residents and can reflect their views quite well.

The Association believes that the vast proportion of Northbridge people would prefer the name:

**SUSPENSION BRIDGE**

(or alternatively, NORTHBRIDGE SUSPENSION BRIDGE)

We note that most Northbridge residents and non-residents have always called it Suspension Bridge. Indeed, three different plaques currently attached to bridge attest to this name. We have no doubt most people will continue to call it Suspension Bridge in the future no matter what name the RTA finally bestows upon it.

We believe that the fact that the bridge is now an arch bridge (of unique engineering significance) and not a suspension bridge is not relevant to its name. We think the history of the bridge and the original dominant stone towers are more important than “technical correctness” and that the anachronism ‘Suspension Bridge’ is quaint and charming.

The Association is currently carrying out historical research to complete an application for State Heritage Listing of the Suspension Bridge. We would welcome RTA's assistance in this heritage endeavour, especially as the concrete arch replacement bridge itself has great between-the-wars significance for engineering.

This letter relies on research carried out to date (refer to the Annexure) and while incomplete, gives a clear indication of its most commonly accepted name.

We do not support the suggestion of the name "The North Bridge". NPA's committee members do not recall common usage of that name and believe it would be confusing with the suburb name of Northbridge.

We also do not support the name "Cammeray Bridge". The name is not in common usage; it is not even used by North Sydney Council in its own list of heritage items; and it does not appear on any plaques on the bridge. Neither Northbridge nor Cammeray had its current name in 1892. In fact, the suburb to the south became known as "Suspension Bridge", which was changed to Cammeray in about 1914.

By way of summary, we quote a member of the Association who puts it very well: *"I first came to Northbridge in the late 1950s and we called it the Suspension Bridge. My father had been here in the late 1920s and to him it was always the Suspension Bridge. According to the RTA plaque on it, it is called the Suspension Bridge. I have no problem with the fact it is no longer a suspension bridge. In fact, I think as a historic part of the North Shore this reflects what it once was. After all, there is no longer a market in Market Street and there are no longer barracks in Barrack Street."*

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter McNair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Peter McNair  
President

Copy: Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP  
Hon Duncan Gay MP  
Mayor Pat Reilly  
Sailors Bay Ward Councillors  
Nick Tobin, Willoughby City Council  
Lynette Morris, Willoughby City Council

*Note: Much of the research for this submission was carried out by NPA committee members Pam Clifford and Grant Sheldon.*

## Annexure

Our historical research to date shows the following:

- The bridge was referred to as the Suspension Bridge when it was opened to traffic in 1893.
  - In 1909, the tramway was extended to the bridge and the tramway stop on the Cammeray side was named Suspension Bridge.
  - *The Northbridge Chronicle* newspaper in 1924 called it Suspension Bridge.
  - The Department of Main Roads plaque dated September 1939, currently on the bridge, refers to the name Suspension Bridge. No other name is mentioned.
  - In September 1939, the re-built arch bridge was re-named Cammeray Bridge. However, officials of the Department of Main Roads at the time expressed the opinion that the name Suspension Bridge had been so long associated with the old historic structure, that the name was likely to continue in use.
  - The *North Shore Historical Society Journal* of 1983 refers to it as “The Suspension Bridge at Northbridge” quoting “This article is based on material compiled by members of the North Shore Historical Society and published material obtained from the Department of Main Roads”.
  - A Department of Main Roads and NRMA plaque now on the bridge, dated 1988, names the bridge “Suspension Bridge at Northbridge”.
  - Esther Leslie’s 1988 community history *The suburb of Northbridge* refers to “the picturesque Cammeray Bridge ... a bridge still known to many as the Suspension Bridge.” She continues to refer to it as Suspension Bridge (with one other exception) in her history and in the index to her book.
  - North Sydney Council’s (undated) plaque now on the southern side of the bridge refers to the “Suspension Bridge, Cammeray”. The plaque does not mention the name Cammeray Bridge.
  - A North Sydney Council heritage leaflet dated September 1992 and updated in January 2002 is headed *Suspension Bridge*. The leaflet states: “This picturesque bridge has had many name references to it over the last 100 years including:  
The Suspension Bridge, Northbridge;  
The Suspension Bridge, Cammeray;  
Cammeray Bridge;  
The North Sydney Suspension Bridge; and  
Suspension Bridge, North Sydney”.
- The leaflet continues: “Although the name of ‘Cammeray Bridge’ was attached to the newly restored Bridge, the popular name of ‘Suspension Bridge’ survives to the present day. Cammeray became the name of the area surrounding the bridge during the 1920s. Originally, the suburb itself was called Suspension Bridge.”
- Two RTA/Sydney Electricity/Rotary plaques on the bridge dated October 1992 commemorating the floodlighting of the bridge name it as “the Suspension Bridge”.
  - Willoughby City Council’s LEP 1995 dated December 15 2008 names it as Suspension Bridge in its list of Willoughby’s heritage items.
  - North Sydney Council’s LEP 2001 refers to the bridge as “The North Bridge, Miller St” (the rare time this name has been used), and not Cammeray Bridge.
  - The Australian Government’s Australian Heritage Database calls it the “Suspension Bridge, Miller St, Cammeray, NSW, Australia”.
  - The present Sydney Buses stop No 06 on the Cammeray side of the bridge is labelled “Suspension Bridge”.