



Scott Simpson

Member of Parliament for Coromandel

Gary Blake
13 Pohue Creek Road
RD 5
Thames 3575

30 June 2014

Dear Gary

As you know I presented the petition of the Historic Kōpū Bridge Society to the Minister of Transport Hon. Gerry Brownlee personally on 26 May 2014.

At the time I presented the petition, I provided the Minister with a background letter to which I have now received a response.

A copy of the Minister reply is enclosed for your information and the contents are self-explanatory.

Like you, I will await the decisions of the NZ Transport Agency and Thames Coromandel District Council with keen interest.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Simpson', written over a horizontal line.

Scott Simpson
MP for Coromandel

Authorised by Scott Simpson MP, 614 Pollen Street, Thames 3500



Office of Hon Gerry Brownlee

MP for Ilam

Leader of the House

Minister of Transport

Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery

Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission

24 JUN 2014

Scott Simpson
Member of Parliament for Coromandel
mpecoromandel@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Mr Simpson

Thank you for your letter of 26 May 2014 providing me with details of the Historic Kopu Bridge Society's petition.

I am aware of the society's business management plan and responded to the society on 22 October 2013, copy attached. The NZ Transport Agency has carefully considered the business case but was unable to support it, due to concerns around funding to upgrade, maintain and operate the bridge and swing span to the standard required for the foreseeable future.

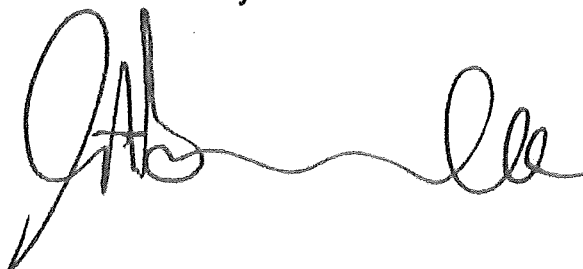
I understand the Historic Kopu Bridge Society has approached the Thames Coromandel District Council to determine whether the council would support and assist with saving the structure for reuse. The council has approached the NZ Transport Agency to determine if there is a possibility for the funds for demolition to be transferred to the council and used to save the structure. Attached is a letter of response to this query from the NZ Transport Agency, which in effect says the NZ Transport Agency would consider transferring funds provided the council can demonstrate that no liability would come back to the NZ Transport Agency or the government in the future. The NZ Transport Agency has delayed its programme to gain consent for deconstructing the bridge while it waits for a response from the council, which is expected around the end of June 2014.

As the old Kopu Bridge has now been decommissioned and declared surplus to use as a State highway, it is the NZ Transport Agency's responsibility to determine an outcome for the future of the bridge. Normally this would be demolition, or revocation to a council for local roading purposes. Initially both Thames Coromandel District Council and Huaraki District Council made it clear they were not interested in revocation. In light of this, the NZ Transport Agency then undertook a thorough investigation through engagement with the local community and councils, into possible options for reuse of the bridge. The main objective was to find an entity with a business case for reuse that was viable and sustainable and gave confidence it could generate sufficient revenue to maintain the structure in perpetuity. Only one business case was received, that being from the Historic Kopu Bridge Society. The NZ Transport Agency was not confident that the business case was financially viable.

I am satisfied that the NZ Transport Agency has done and continues to do all it can to consider options alternative to the deconstruction of the bridge and to consider financially viable options for retention and reuse of the bridge by another entity.

If the Historic Kopu Bridge Society would like to discuss this matter further with the NZ Transport Agency, representatives are welcome to contact Kaye Clark, Highway Manager on (07) 958 7220 or at kaye.clark@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Brownlee', written in a cursive style.

Hon Gerry Brownlee
Minister of Transport



Office of Hon Gerry Brownlee

MP for Ham

Leader of the House

Minister of Transport

Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery

Minister Responsible for the Earthquake Commission

22 OCT 2013

Gary Blake
Chairperson
Historic Kopu Bridge Society
gary.blake@clear.net.nz

Dear Mr Blake

Thank you for your email of 11 September 2013 regarding the old Kopu Bridge. I have asked the NZ Transport Agency about its response to your business management plan.

The NZ Transport Agency's Chief Executive, Geoff Dangerfield, noted in his letter to you of 22 August 2013 that at that time no plans for the deconstruction of the bridge had been put in place. He also advised that staff from the NZ Transport Agency's Hamilton office would meet with you and the Historic Places Trust to answer your questions about the NZ Transport Agency decision to deconstruct the bridge. I understand this meeting took place on 22 August 2013.

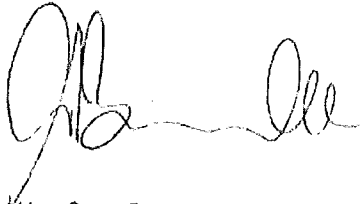
The future of the old Kopu Bridge was considered very carefully by the NZ Transport Agency. I am assured that the NZ Transport Agency has followed the appropriate engagement processes to take the views of the community, key stakeholders, interested parties, and the local councils' considerations into account.

The NZ Transport Agency also carefully considered the business case you presented but were unable to support it. I understand the NZ Transport Agency's concerns were around sufficient funding to upgrade, maintain and operate the bridge (including the swing span to enable boats to traverse the channel) to the standard required for the foreseeable future. I appreciate that the outcome is not what you hoped for.

I understand that part of the NZ Transport Agency's plan includes retaining and placing key parts of the historic structure in ways that the wider public can continue to enjoy in years to come. I hope that the Historic Kopu Bridge Society will continue to play a part in the plans for the structure and the ongoing celebration of its history.

If you would like to discuss this matter further with the NZ Transport Agency you are welcome to contact Kaye Clark, Highway Manager on (07) 958 7220 or at kaye.clark@nzta.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Brownlee', written in a cursive style.

Hon Gerry Brownlee
Minister of Transport

Copy to: **Hon Simon Bridges**
 Member of Parliament for Tauranga

Hon Christopher Finlayson
Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage



NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
 WAKATOAPŌ

Level 6 Centre Building
 14 Bridge Street
 PO Box 973
 Waikato Mail Centre
 Hamilton 3240
 New Zealand
 T 64 7 557 1207
 F 64 7 557 1437
 www.nzta.govt.nz

08 May 2014

David Hammond
 Chief Executive
 Thames Coromandel District Council
 Private Bag
 THAMES 3540

Dear David

Future of the Old Kopu Bridge

Thank you for your letter dated 1 May 2014 in which you ask for confirmation of whether or not the NZ Transport Agency would transfer funds equivalent to the cost of demolishing the old bridge to Council if it worked with other partners to save the structure

The Transport Agency has declared the old bridge redundant because it is surplus to our obligations of providing a state highway network. Both Hauraki and Thames Coromandel District Councils advised us that they would not require the surplus infrastructure for local roading purposes so revocation was not pursued.

Following extensive public engagement and consultation, the Transport Agency was unsuccessful in finding a viable and sustainable proposal for reuse of the structure. Under this scenario a trust or other entity would take on the management, operation and ongoing maintenance of the structure. Had such a proposal been received then the Transport Agency proposed that the estimated cost to remove the bridge which the Transport Agency would no longer be required to do, would be held in trust in the event that the entity failed at some point in the future. The main reason for this was the clear message from the local councils that they did not want to attract any future liability or costs to their rate payers.

The Transport Agency is now in the processing of stopping the section of road under the public works act, and demolishing the redundant structure. You will be aware of our proposals to do our utmost to retain and celebrate the key historical elements of the structure.

At this stage our estimate to remove the structure and reinstate the area appropriate to the surrounding environment is far more robust and is around \$2.3M. To date we have spent in the order of \$150K as the project is currently underway.

In order for us to consider transferring the demolition funding Council will need to satisfy us that ownership of the structure and all future costs and liabilities would transfer away from the Transport Agency and there would be minimal or preferably no risk that the entity would fail in the future and leave a burden on the general public or the government.

Your advice as to whether or not you will pursue such an option is required as soon as practicable. In the interim the Transport Agency is continuing with its project to remove the structure and effectively using up the demolition funds. The amount of funds available will therefore continue to decrease with time.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this letter further.

Yours sincerely

Robert Brodnax
 Acting Regional Director
 Waikato/Bay of Plenty