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## Taxpayers Left With Millions in Costs After Sydney Harbour Bridge Protest, Minns Says

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**Sydney, Australia** – New South Wales (NSW) Premier Chris Minns has confirmed that taxpayers will be footing a multimillion-dollar bill following a large-scale protest that shut down the Sydney Harbour Bridge over the weekend. The event, organized by the Palestine Action Group and dubbed the “March for Humanity,” drew an estimated 90,000 demonstrators and brought central Sydney to a standstill for several hours on Sunday.

The protest, which began around 11:30 a.m. and continued until nearly 5 p.m., caused significant traffic disruptions and required extensive police resources. Despite initial plans for the event to conclude by 4 p.m., authorities struggled to clear the area on time.

Speaking to reporters on Monday morning, Premier Minns said the protest cost taxpayers “millions, certainly in overtime, and more on top of that,” though he did not offer a precise figure.

The financial burden of the demonstration has sparked renewed debate over who should be responsible for the costs of large-scale public protests, particularly those that result in major infrastructure closures and public safety risks. Critics have called for the organizing group to be held accountable, suggesting that taxpayers should not bear the brunt of politically motivated disruptions.

The protest proceeded after the NSW Supreme Court rejected an application from police to block the march on public safety grounds. Justice Belinda Rigg ruled in favor of the Palestine Action Group, citing the constitutional right to freedom of speech and assembly. The decision also granted protestors legal immunity from various public order offenses, including obstruction of traffic and pedestrian walkways.

Premier Minns, who publicly opposed the protest, warned that the decision could set a troubling precedent. “No one should believe it is open season on the bridge,” he said during a press conference, referencing concerns that Sydney’s key transport artery could become a recurring venue for politically charged demonstrations. He also noted that the government is reviewing the court’s ruling and its broader implications for public infrastructure use.

Former NSW Police Minister David Elliott also criticized the event, pointing out that even veterans are required to pay fees to march on ANZAC Day. He told *Sky News* the protest had “wasted literally millions of dollars” and diverted essential police resources that could have been used for emergency services and public safety, especially amid recent inclement weather.

“This kind of disruption, especially at such a scale, undermines critical services and puts undue strain on emergency planning,” Elliott said. “It’s not just a matter of free speech. It’s a matter of public responsibility.”

The controversy has highlighted ongoing tensions between civil liberties and public order, with growing calls for tighter regulations on large-scale protests that impact essential infrastructure. As public costs rise, lawmakers are expected to re-examine how protest-related expenses are managed and who should ultimately bear the burden.