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## Sydney Protest Shuts Bridge, Costs Millions

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A massive pro-Palestine protest closed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, costing taxpayers millions, as New South Wales (NSW) Premier Chris Minns questions its precedent.

On August 3, 2025, an estimated 90,000 to 300,000 protesters, organized by the Palestine Action Group, marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, halting traffic for five hours. NSW Premier Chris Minns stated the demonstration cost taxpayers millions, raising concerns about who should bear the financial burden. The New South Wales Supreme Court overruled police objections, citing public safety, to allow the march, prompting debate over future protests on critical infrastructure. Minns emphasized that the bridge is not “open season” for demonstrations, highlighting the logistical challenges and costs involved.

The protest, dubbed the “March for Humanity,” aimed to highlight the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Despite its peaceful execution, Minns faced backlash from within his own Labor Party. Members like Stephen Lawrence and Anthony D’Adam criticized his opposition, arguing it prioritized traffic flow over human rights. Lawrence warned that blocking such protests could lead to violence, while D’Adam accused Minns of downplaying the Gaza crisis. Other Labor MPs, including Penny Sharpe and Jihad Dib, joined the march, underscoring internal party tensions.

Minns defended his stance, stating the government is reviewing the court’s ruling to assess if it sets a precedent for future bridge closures. He argued that repeated disruptions could paralyze Sydney, citing the bridge’s role as a vital artery for thousands daily. The NSW Police, supported by Minns, noted the event’s scale required months of planning, unlike the week’s notice provided. Acting Deputy Commissioner Peter McKenna emphasized public safety as the primary concern, denying political influence in their decision.

Opposition voices, including Nationals Member of Parliament (MP) Paul Toole, called for legislation to shield the bridge from future protests, citing impacts on emergency services and commuters. Meanwhile, protest organizer Amal Naser celebrated the march’s success, dismissing police claims of peril as exaggerated. The event drew high-profile attendees like former NSW Premier Bob Carr and Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore.

The financial toll has prompted debate over whether organizers should be responsible for policing costs. Premier Chris Minns has acknowledged the issue and stated that the government is reviewing its approach to balancing protest rights and public access. No official policy change has been announced yet.