



In this issue

- »»»» Geoff and Joy hit the road to test drive our *Drive to Conditions* pack
- »»»» Construction begins —new Mulgrave River bridge
- »»»» Far North Region awarded for excellence
- »»»» Bicycle lanes go green for a safer ride
- »»»» The road ahead — we profile key local Main Roads projects

A message from our Regional Director, Bruce Gould

WELCOME to the special Show Edition of *Main Roads Local Links* – the Main Roads Cairns Office’s newsletter for the Far North region.

Although in the Far North it can be hard actually working out when winter has kicked in, it’s safe to say with the Cairns show upon us, the dry season (or as close as we’re going to get to it) is here.

This dry season we have launched an exciting new initiative that aims to help make the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) safer.

As a mad keen fisherman and someone who has driven to the Cape along the PDR a number of times in search of the biggest barra, I know how important it is to drive to the conditions.

It was actually during one of my trips that our *Drive to Conditions* initiative began to take form.

After sitting down and talking to fellow travellers along

the PDR it was clear more people needed to understand how important it is to drive to the unique conditions of the road.

We have used the feedback and experiences from people who have driven the road to help shape the information provided in *Drive to Conditions* packs that have been distributed at popular pit stops and traveller destinations in Cairns and along the PDR.

We have been lucky enough to have the support of a range of businesses, tourism bodies and government agencies. Thank you to all those people who are working with us to deliver this initiative and who have agreed to distribute our packs.

We decided to launch the initiative at the Cairns Holiday Resort after one of the resort’s staff contacted us in response to an advertisement for the initiative that ran in the Cairns Post. A big thanks to the resort for their hospitality.

On behalf of the Main Roads Cairns Office enjoy the show and safe travels. If you get a chance please take the time to enjoy our stall at the Cairns Show (located in the Fred Moule Pavillon).

Bruce Gould

From left to right: Minister for Main Roads Warren Pitt, Tourism Tropical North Queensland Chairman Stephen Olle and Main Roads Regional Director (Cairns) Bruce Gould at the launch of the *Drive to Conditions* Campaign at Cairns Coconut Holiday Resort.





Geoff and Joy
take our Drive to
Conditions tips and
hit the open road...

NOT only are Geoff and Joy Gleeson about to hit the dirt and begin their Cape York 4WD adventure, they are also test driving our new *Drive to Conditions* initiative.

The Hunter Valley based couple have agreed to use the information and tips provided in our free *Drive to Conditions* packs and act as our travelling reviewers.

As they journey along the Peninsula Developmental Road (PDR) they will provide feedback on the information and tips - letting us know what worked well, what could be improved and offering any tips of their own.

As part of the initiative, *Drive to the Conditions* information packs have been distributed at popular traveller pit stops like roadhouses and service stations along the PDR and in Cairns.

According to Main Roads' Regional Director (Cairns) Bruce Gould, the packs include useful information about the PDR and driving tips to help motorists manage the unique challenges of the road.

"It's crucial for motorists to understand every road presents different challenges," Mr Gould said.

"The PDR has its own unique conditions, such as an unsealed surface, dusty conditions and potential stray livestock and wildlife."

The packs are already proving popular, with 3,000 packs already distributed to travellers heading north.

Minister for Main Roads Warren Pitt officially launched the initiative at the Cairns Coconut Holiday

Resort on 13 June 2008 and said he hoped it would save lives by reducing the number of crashes on the PDR this dry season.

"Over the last five years from, April 2003 to April 2008, there were more than 68 reported crashes on this road, including eight fatalities," Mr Pitt said.

"That's a considerable figure and on top of this number are other incidents that don't get reported."

Mr Pitt said he wanted to stress that while Main Roads would continue to do what it could to improve safety on this road, motorists needed to drive to the conditions.

"\$21 million is currently being spent to widen and seal a 25km section of this road between Lily Creek and Crocodile Gap south of Laura. It is due for completion mid 2009," Mr Pitt said.

"While these works will make a difference, it is important to remember that driver behaviour is the overwhelming contributing factor in serious crashes.

"For this reason it is crucial that motorists always drive to the road and weather conditions."

Main Roads are also looking for travellers willing to use the Drive to Conditions packs on their own journey on the PDR and review how useful the information and tips are.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, or if you would like a pack sent to you then call 07 4050 5405.

Preparing for the next Big Wet

Works just south of Tully are due for completion December 2009 and will improve flood immunity

AS Far North residents and motorists travelling through the area well know, with each year's 'Big Wet' comes flooding and often major disruption.

Thanks to the Federal Government's \$348 million AusLink funded Accelerated Bruce Highway Upgrade Package between Townsville and Cairns the coming wet seasons should hopefully see fewer journeys stalled as motorists wait for flood waters to reside.

One of these projects is the 15.5km upgrade of the Bruce Highway just south of Tully.

Works are progressing well with the \$128 million project expected to be completed by December 2009.

The aim of the project is to improve safety and upgrade the flood immunity to a closure time of 48 hours during a 50 year event, with an average annual closure time of less than 10 hours.

Other projects aiming to keep flood waters at bay are the new bridge over the Mulgrave River, works near Ingham and the upgrade of the Warner Road intersection.

A \$2.9 million AusLink funded upgrade of Warner Road intersection will begin in late 2008. A T-intersection with the Bruce Highway and locally known as "Yarrabah Road" – the Warner Road intersection will be raised by 250 mm and culverts installed to improve flood immunity.

Traffic signals, islands and turning lanes will also be installed to increase safety for all vehicles travelling through the intersection, with RoadTek contracted to carry out the works.

Queensland Main Roads Minister Warren Pitt said the introduction of the AusLink Program has allowed both federal and state governments to cooperate on a coordinated round of works designed to improve the flood immunity of the highway between Townsville and Cairns.

"It is no use fixing the problem at one location if the highway is cut regularly elsewhere. The ability of the highway to better serve the community in times of flood will help sustain the local economy all year round and limit disruption," Minister Pitt said.



The first of the 5,000 native seedlings to be planted in and around the project.



Minister for Main Roads Warren Pitt and Federal Member for Leichhardt Jim Turnour plant a native seedling.

Work starts on new \$48 million Mulgrave River Bridge



Minister Pitt at the official launch of the new Mulgrave River bridge.

CONSTRUCTION of the new \$48 million Mulgrave River bridge at Gordonvale has begun with Minister for Main Roads Warren Pitt and the Federal Member for Leichhardt Jim Turnour officially launching the project on Thursday, 29 May 2008.

The launch of the project saw Mr Pitt and Mr Turnour turn the first sod of soil and plant the first of 5,000 native trees at the site.

The new, higher-level bridge is designed to improve flood immunity during the wet season and will stand five metres higher than the present bridge.

Mr Pitt congratulated the Australian Government on the bridge project, saying the new bridge would provide a valuable and vital piece of road infrastructure.

“The Auslink program has allowed both governments to work on a coordinated series of projects designed to make the Bruce Highway safer and more flood-immune into the future,” Mr Pitt said.



The current Mulgrave River Bridge - completion of the new bridge is expected Christmas 2009.

“As a local resident for many years, I have experienced first-hand the inconvenience of highway closures due to wet season flooding.

“The completion of the new bridge will help sustain the highway in times of flooding by limiting closures.”

Mr Turnour represented the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Anthony Albanese, at the event.

Mr Turnour said the project was another example of the way in which the federal and state governments had collaborated to move a significant infrastructure project off the drawing board and into its construction phase.

“The new 475-metre bridge is part of our joint commitment to improving accessibility between Cairns and Townsville, and is one component of the \$348 million Accelerated Bruce Highway Upgrade Package,” Mr Turnour said.

“The bridge will not only stand higher but be located about 30 metres upstream from the existing highway on an improved road alignment.”

The project would also include upgrades to the



Main Roads Regional Director (Cairns) Bruce Gould, Federal Member for Leichhardt Jim Turnour, Minister for Main Roads and Member for Mulgrave Warren Pitt and Mulgrave Landcare and Catchment Group Manager Bruce Corcoran.

approaches to the bridge and the relocation of the existing cane railway line.

Some 5,000 native seedlings will be planted in and around the project area in the coming months, to offset the removal of vegetation necessary for the construction of the new bridge.

Main Roads has contracted the Mulgrave Landcare and Catchment Group to carry out the planting and to maintain the new plants over the coming 18 months.

“The Mulgrave River riparian corridor has environmental significance as it contributes to connectivity between the western Bellenden Ker mountain range and eastern Malbon Thompson mountain range sections of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area,” Mr Pitt said.

“Given it is also home to the southern cassowary, it was important that measures were put in place, during design and construction of the bridge, to maintain habitat integrity along the river channel as much as possible.”

Construction of the new bridge is expected to be completed by December 2009, weather permitting.

The road ahead



WANT to know what the road ahead holds for Far North residents over the coming months? We profile some of the major projects that have either kickstarted or are just around the corner.

Front Street, Mossman

Main Roads has contracted Cairns Works, a business unit of Cairns Regional Council, to undertake major roadworks on Front Street, Mossman from 22 July 2008.

These works will involve road stabilisation, sealing and asphaltting more than 760 metres of Front Street (from Harper Street to Mill Street).

There will be significant changes to traffic conditions during construction due to road closures. Most of the work will be carried out overnight to limit the disruption to local business and road users. There will be some noise disruptions and limited access through the job site.

Motorists are advised to use detours around the job site and to obey traffic controllers at all times. Construction work is expected to be completed in approximately three weeks, weather permitting.

Cairns Western Arterial MacIlwraith Street to Mark's Place

REHABILITATION works on two sections of the Cairns Western Arterial Road are expected to start in August 2008 with completion expected end of September 2008.

The works include:

Reservoir Road (Pease Street Intersection to Mark's Place)

- the left turn lane from Reservoir Road to Pease Street will be lengthened by 50 metres
- linemarking changes to install an extra inbound lane on Reservoir Road
- resurfacing works.

MacIlwraith Street to Anderson Street Roundabout

- linemarking changes to install an extra left turn lane from Pease Street into Reservoir Road

- installation of a traffic signal for the two new left turn lanes from Pease Street into Reservoir Road
- widening of the paved footpath on Pease Street, between MacIlwraith Street and Reservoir Road to provide a shared path for cyclists and pedestrians.

The paving work on Pease Street intersection and Reservoir Road (to the day-care centre) will be carried out at night to minimise disruption to traffic. The remaining work will be carried out during working hours.

Cairns Regional Council is also carrying out works at the same time to lessen the impact on residents and local business.

Mulgrave Road Aumuller Street Intersection Upgrade

MULGRAVE Road's \$16 million upgrade is well underway. The next stage of works will involve:

- constructing six lanes on Mulgrave Road from south of the Severin Street intersection through to Creedy Street
- installing additional through lanes on Aumuller St north and south
- installing two staged pedestrian crossings on Mulgrave Road
- upgrading street lighting including the removal of small blister islands no longer required
- linemarking bicycle lanes and hook turn storage boxes
- installing bicycle push buttons to activate lights.

Work will be carried out between 6am and 6pm Monday to Saturday with some night work expected. To minimise disruption to traffic during peak hours, lane closures will be restricted to between the hours of 9am and 4pm. The speed limit may also be reduced to 40km through the worksite when required.

Motorists are encouraged to use alternative routes where possible with delays of up to 15 minutes expected.

Cairns Regional Council has been contracted to carry out the work on Main Roads behalf, with completion expected at the end of December 2008.

We ask motorists to observe the road works signage and drive carefully through the work site for the safety of themselves and the road workers.

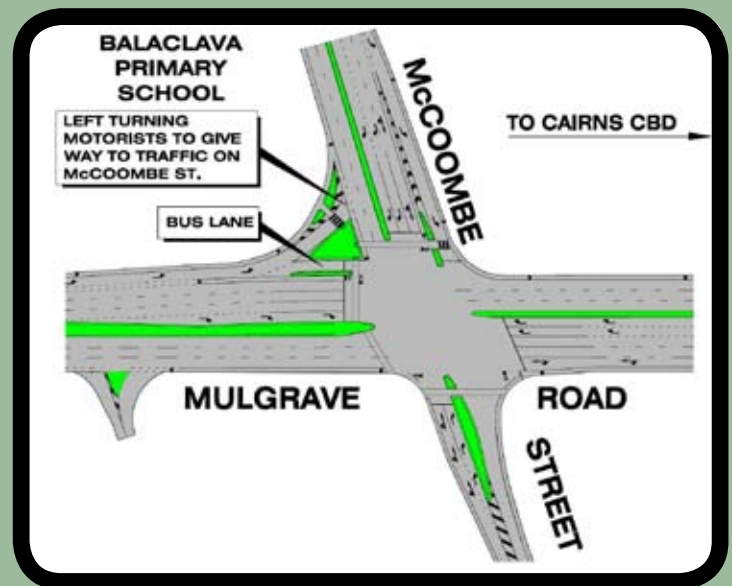
Mulgrave Road facelift delivers Cairns' first

If you're one of the 40,000 motorists that use Mulgrave Road every day, you would have noticed the recent changes on one of Cairns' busiest intersections.

For the first time in Cairns there is a dedicated bus priority lane with its own designated light. The lane is installed next to the inbound traffic lanes near Balaclava State School and will allow public buses to queue in a separate traffic lane.

Other changes include:

- an extra right turn lane from Mulgrave Road into McCoombe Street North
- an extra right turn lane from McCoombe Street north into Mulgrave Road South
- a high entry turn from Mulgrave Road into McCoombe Street North which means motorists will have to give way to traffic right turning from Mulgrave Road into McCoombe Street North.



More overtaking lanes between Townsville and Cairns

MORE overtaking lanes between Townsville and Cairns will improve road safety for Far North motorists.

The \$23 million AusLink funded overtaking lanes will begin construction during 2008 and 2009 and include:

- **Victory Creek to Jogo Road** (3.2km) - construction has begun with completion expected late November 2008
- **Giddens Creek to Babinda** (1.4km) - detailed design underway and construction expected to start late August 2008
- **Digger Creek to Bells Creek** - business case underway, construction expected after May 2009

Awarded for Excellence

Two unique Cairns District Office projects have walked away with a 2008 Main Roads Excellence Awards - Merit Award.

The 2008 Main Roads Excellence Awards were held on 22 May and celebrate outstanding work by Main Roads employees.

So who excelled in the Cairns District Office? The Merit Award winners were: Prototype Traffic Safety Sign in the category – *Safety Innovation and Excellence* and the Northern Peninsula Construction Alliance in the category – *Strengthening Rural and Regional Queensland*.

About the Prototype Traffic Safety Sign

A NEAR miss for a local police officer at the scene of an accident provided the Cairns District Office with motivation to develop an innovative prototype sign.

The sign, which helps protect Main Roads employees and emergency services at the scene of road accidents, was developed in conjunction with Queensland Police.

Project Manager, Jeff Madsen said the new sign will help provide sufficient warning to traffic travelling down the Kuranda Range and ensure the safety and wellbeing for workers on the scene.

“Traffic accidents on mountain range roads create challenging situations for Main Roads staff and emergency services.

“As a result, traffic can pile up to two to three kilometers behind the accident,” Jeff said.

In order to caution motorists of the conditions ahead, Jeff developed a prototype safety sign which officers can use at traffic crash sites to warn motorists of upcoming accidents.

Jeff said the sign incorporates several features, including the added bonus of easy and quick installation.

“Police can erect the sign in seconds and then continue on to the accident site.

“The sign is highly reflective at night and rolls up to fit into a tube about 50 millimeters in width so that it can easily fit into the boot of any vehicle,” Jeff said.



Left to right: Inspector Rolf Straatemeier, Sergeant Lesic Antoni and Main Roads Project Manager Jeff Madsen.

About the Northern Peninsula Construction Alliance



THE Northern Peninsula Construction Alliance (the Alliance) is about building a better road and a better future for the five remote Far North communities of Bamaga, Seisia, Umagico and Injinoo.

A partnership between indigenous private sector contractors, the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council and Main Roads' Remote Community Service Unit (RCSU), the Alliance has achieved commercial success and their work is providing beneficial economic and social outcomes to their communities.

For the RCSU, the Alliance represents the third phase of a 20 year partnership — with indigenous contractors forming an alliance to provide infrastructure construction and maintenance. During this third phase RCSU fulfils a mentoring role — offering advice and support to the Alliance.

The Alliance has achieved 75 per cent indigenous employment across its projects and has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Cook Shire Council to provide stewardship of the Northern Peninsula access road north of Heathlands, some 200km south of Bamaga.

One of the Alliance's indigenous private contractors, Reg Williams, believes the Alliance is providing positive outcomes for his community.

"We're proud of the fact we're providing a service like any other contractor," Mr Williams said.

"With the Alliance we go out there and look for work, we don't wait for someone to contact us. We're about creating employment. We believe we've really proven ourselves over the last year, especially with the maintenance and development of the Northern Peninsula access road north of Heathlands."

Mr Williams said he feels the community is proud of what the Alliance is doing and achieving.

"The road has been open for longer since the Alliance started and each year the road is opening earlier. The feedback from the community and other people like tourists is really encouraging. Tourists always give us the thumbs up and tell us... you're doing a good job and we hope you go a bit further south this year."





Bicycle lanes go green for a safer ride

MAIN ROADS has been painting bicycle lanes at major intersections and roundabouts in Cairns a bright green, making them easier to distinguish from regular vehicle lanes.

Why green? The emerald green used to mark out the lanes is a standard colour used throughout the country for bicycle lanes. And, according to Main Roads Manager for Network Planning and Performance, Helius Visser the bicycle lanes are easier to recognise and help motorists and cyclists identify designated bicycles lanes on busy roads.

“We have marked selected sections of bikeway that we’ve determined are particularly difficult for motorists and cyclists to identify,” Mr Visser said.

Main Roads contracted Cairns Regional Council to undertake the painting. The work was completed in early July.

The works started on Mulgrave Road, between Severin Street to Sheridan Street and progressed through to Anderson Street from the McLeod St roundabout to English Street. They then extended to Cairns Western Arterial Road at the intersection of Moody and Hoare Street.

Mr Visser said Main Roads would measure the effectiveness of the green lanes by comparing video footage taken prior to the painting and then after the lanes had been in place for a couple of months.

“By studying the video footage we will be able to monitor the bicycle usage of the new green lanes and also determine how the cyclist and motorists react.”



Getting the word out - a year on

IT'S been a year since the first of our "monthly notices to motorists" hit the presses.

The notices are published in local newspapers and also distributed to all local members of parliament, tourism bodies and operators, government departments and agencies like emergency services and police as well as local councilors and council staff.

Acting Public Consultation Officer Maria Mezes said the community consultation team had received nothing but positive feedback since they started the notices.

"Our goal in the public consultation team is to keep the community up-to-date and in the loop when it comes to our road works and initiatives and how they will impact road users."

For more information about the monthly notices contact Maria Mezes on 07 4040 6358

Contact details for Cairns District Office



The Cairns District Office has a new general email address — cairns.office@mainroads.qld.gov.au



07 4050 5444 or 13 19 40

We welcome and seriously consider all feedback, complaints and suggestions.