

Temporary widening works of the existing highway in April 2016.

Peak Downs Highway Safety Works Eton Range Realignment

Project newsletter – July 2016

About the project

The Peak Downs Highway Safety Works (Eton Range Realignment) at Eton Range, west of Mackay is a \$189 million project funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments. The major works include a partial realignment of the existing Eton Range crossing, widening to four lanes, a split carriageway and a reduction in grade.

Due to the complex nature of the project, extensive geotechnical investigations were undertaken to inform the design and procurement process. Fulton Hogan are carrying out the works after being awarded the contract in December 2015. Around 295 direct jobs will be supported over the life of the project.



Clearing and excavation works undertaken in May 2016.

Why is it needed?

The Peak Downs Highway is the only designated B-Double route from Mackay, west to the Northern Bowen Basin, servicing the communities of Nebo, Moranbah, Clermont, Dysart and Middlemount. More than 4000 vehicles travel through the Eton Range each day, including 800 heavy vehicles, making it an important servicing link for the mining, grazing and agricultural industries in the area.

The safety improvements will have significant benefits to the reliability and efficiency of the Peak Downs Highway from Nebo to Mackay by allowing the range to be used by type 1 road trains. The project will also reduce the need to close the range for oversized vehicles and provide more opportunities for motorists to overtake heavy vehicles.

Fast fact

The current Eton Range crossing has a steep grade, rising 130 metres in less than 1.5 kilometres. The new alignment will reduce this grade from 11.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent.

Project progress

Construction started on the Eton Range Realignment in April 2016. Initial works included temporary widening of the existing highway as well as vegetation clearing and excavation for access



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tracks. In May through to June, single lane closures were in place while roadworks, line marking and barrier installation were undertaken.

Blasting works to pre-split batters also started in late May and are scheduled to occur weekly for the next few months. The project team also established a mobile concrete batching plant for the duration of the project.

What's next...

Works from July through to late September 2016 include:

- installation of drainage works to commence in July
- continuing of excavation works and processing of on-site material for embankments
- placement of reinforced earth embankments is to commence in July. The completion of the most critical reinforced embankment, which is 800m long, is expected for early 2017.

Overall project construction is expected to finish late 2018.



Traffic stops as a wide load travels through the project site. Once completed the project will reduce the need to close the range for oversized vehicles.



Earthworks activities undertaken in June 2016.

Environmental management

Field works are due to start in August 2016 on a Koala Research Project, commissioned by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The study is being delivered as an environmental condition to offset any potential impacts the road project may have on koalas.

The aim of the research project is to gain more knowledge about the koala population of the Clarke-Connors Range. The study's findings will be used by the department to inform koala sensitive design along the Peak Downs Highway to help prevent koala mortalities and vehicle strikes.

The study is being undertaken by CQUniversity and Koala Research CQ and will canvas areas along the Peak Downs Highway from Eton to Nebo.

For more information about the study visit the Eton Range Realignment Project webpage via www.tmr.qld.gov.au and follow the links.