

MEDIA STATEMENT

26 September 2018

Marine moorings initiative helps Moreton Bay thrive

The Gateway Upgrade North project is helping to offset impacts on the environment by restoring and protecting seagrass habitats in Moreton Bay.

The project team is working together with Healthy Land and Water, to carry out a seagrass restoration program - one of several environmental offset initiatives being implemented by this major infrastructure project.

Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Regional Director Paul Mengede said the department was dedicated to minimising environmental impacts of major projects.

“The Moreton Bay moorings initiative is just one example of environmental programs being implemented across major infrastructure projects across Queensland,” Mr Mengede said.

Due to its location near sensitive ecosystems, the Gateway Upgrade North project went through detailed environmental planning.

“This is a project located close to tidal and wetland areas along the Moreton Bay coast, including the Ramsar-listed Boondall Wetlands Reserve,” Mr Mengede said.

“Rigorous planning was undertaken throughout its design to minimise the project’s environmental footprint and to ensure we are meeting Queensland’s environmental offset requirements.

“The environmentally friendly moorings being used in the seagrass restoration program replace the old-style boat anchor points with an innovative screw pile and floating line tether.

“This combination removes mooring components that can damage the seagrass habitat.”

Chief Operating Officer for Healthy Land and Water Scott Jose said seagrasses in Moreton Bay played a critical ecological role as habitat and nursery for young fish, dugongs and sea turtles.

“Seagrasses trap and stabilise sediments, helping to prevent erosion in estuaries,” Mr Jose said.

“Traditional block and chain boat moorings located throughout Moreton Bay continuously drag along the sea floor, ripping out seagrass and habitat eventually causing bare patches.

“This program helps to restore the original ecosystem, which will support the local marine life into the future.”

A total of 115 environmentally friendly moorings will be installed, which is expected to restore about nine hectares of valuable seagrass habitat.

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More about the Seagrass restoration program:

Seagrass are flowering plants which grow in marine, fully saline environments.

The moorings installed through the program will remain in place permanently, encouraging seagrass recovery into the future.

Each mooring location will be designated as an Offset Protection Area under the Environmental Offset Act to ensure the recovery and security of the seagrass.

The Seagrass Restoration Program started in December 2015, and planned completion is December 2018.

Visit: <http://hlw.org.au/initiatives/environmentally-friendly-moorings-sad-14646>

More about environmental offsets:

The Gateway Upgrade North project works with the Department Of Environment and Sciences to meet its State environmental offset requirements under *The Environmental Offsets Act 2014*.

Under the Act, the project is required to provide offsets for removal of habitat trees, removal of marine plants and any impacts to areas that are designated Marine Park.

Offsets can be provided in a range of forms including financial payments and on-ground initiatives. The Department of Environment and Sciences website provides an offset calculator to assist with determining the quantity of offset required.

Visit: <https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/>

Background on the Gateway Upgrade North project:

The Gateway Upgrade North project is expected to be completed by late 2018 (weather permitting) and includes:

- upgrading the motorway from four to six lanes between Nudgee and Deagon;
- widening the Deagon Deviation between Depot and Bracken Ridge Roads to provide two lanes in each direction;
- reconfiguring the Nudgee interchange, including a new Nudgee Road overpass and a relocated extended northbound on-ramp;
- modifications to the Bicentennial Road interchange including extended on and off-ramps;
- provision of a grade-separated interchange between the Gateway Motorway and the Deagon Deviation at Deagon;
- construction of an off-road shared pedestrian and cycle path between Nudgee and Bracken Ridge;
- installation of variable speed limit signs, variable messaging signs, traffic monitoring cameras and ramp metering; and
- pavement rehabilitation and safety works from Deagon to Wyampa Road, Bracken Ridge.

The Australian Government has committed \$914.18 million to the Gateway Upgrade North project, in partnership with the Queensland Government which has committed \$228.54 million towards the project.

Visit: www.gatewayupgradenorth.com.au

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