

MEDIA STATEMENT

17 December 2019

Bridge named in honour of pioneering couple

The new bridge over Cattle Creek on the Bruce Highway south of Ingham has been officially named, honouring a couple who put their heart and soul into the land.

Transport and Main Roads Director-General Neil Scales revealed the bridge would be known as the George and Mary Haughtey Bridge.

"The great grandson of George and Mary Haughtey retold the story of his great grandparents and their connection to the land and people of Ingham in his nomination to name the bridge," Mr Scales said.

"He told how George and Mary moved to Ingham in 1896 and bought more than 1200 acres of land in the Cattle and Frances Creek area.

"Here they eventually settled and established the Tuile Roddarch homestead, otherwise known as Floodview, situated between Cattle and Frances Creeks.

"The homestead still stands today and is being restored by one of George and Mary's great grandsons."

Mr Scales said the naming of the bridge presented the perfect opportunity for locals to keep the history of the area alive.

"George and Mary raised their 13 children on this land. They planted the mango trees we still see here today. They too faced many floods over the years and felt the devastating effects of losing stock and crops in floodwaters," he said.

"They were known to the community for their generosity, with George often lending a helping hand to adjoining property owners and Mary assisting local Indigenous women and children when they were sick."

The \$118.9 million Bruce Highway Bridge upgrade, Cattle and Frances Creek, project included a new higher-level bridge and approaches at Cattle Creek and a new, wider bridge at Frances Creek.

"The new George and Mary Haughtey Bridge over Cattle Creek is an impressive 644m long, spanning the entire floodplain along with the new Frances Creek Bridge," Mr Scales said.

"As a direct result of this project, we are going to see significant reductions in road closures due to flooding during severe weather events.

"Together with the new Frances Creek Bridge, the new higher, wider and longer George and Mary Haughtey Bridge will help to reduce the average annual closure time on this stretch of the Bruce Highway from 29 hours to 3.5 hours.

"The project was completed at the end of 2018 and since then, motorists have enjoyed fewer road closures due to flooding and a safer journey along the Bruce Highway."

A local panel made up of representatives from the Cardwell and District Historical Society, the Lions Club of Ingham, the Hinchinbrook Chamber of Commerce and the Warrgamay Traditional Owner Group convened to review the public nominations and decide on a name for the new bridge.

"The panel members considered 25 submissions and their supporting reasoning, considering criteria such as historical significance, cultural significance and strength of links to the local area," Mr Scales said.

"It wasn't an easy task for the panel, but they have chosen a name which reflects the history of the area, it's humble beginnings and the kind and generous people."

The project was jointly funded by the Australia and Queensland Governments, with the Australian Government contributing \$95.1 million, and the Queensland Government contributing \$23.8 million.

An average of 207 jobs were supported over the life of the project.

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