

Haughton River Floodplain Upgrade Project

Frequently Asked Questions – June 2019

ACRONYMS

HRF	the Haughton River Floodplain Upgrade project
km	kilometres
TMR	the Department of Transport and Main Roads
TIG	The Infrastructure Group (a joint venture company, delivering the project)
VMS	Variable Message Boards, electronic signage placed roadside with road-related messages
WCLT	Wide centreline treatments, a one-metre separation between oncoming traffic lanes

Where is the project?

The HRF project is located on the Bruce Highway at Giru, approximately 30km north of Ayr and 40km south of Townsville. The project footprint extends from south of the Bruce Highway intersection with Trembath Road, to north of the Bruce Highway intersection with Mailman Road (a distance of 13.5 kilometres).

What is the aim of the project?

The HRF project will improve safety and efficiency for road users, as well as significantly improving the capacity of this section of the Bruce Highway to withstand major flooding events.

The HRF project will also address community concerns about the width of the existing Haughton River Bridge and condition of other bridges in the project area.

What does the project involve?

As part of the HRF project:

- the Horseshoe Lagoon, Pink Lily and Haughton River bridges will be replaced with new, wider, higher-level bridges
- new crossings of Healey's Lagoon and the Reed Beds curve / Ironbark Creek will be built
- 13.5km of the Bruce Highway will be upgraded, in some areas on a new alignment
- highway overpasses of the nearby cane tramway network will be constructed at Upper Haughton/Hodel Road and Shirbourne Road, removing the existing open-level crossings
- the Trembath, Bartlett, Woodstock Giru, Link, Piralko, Sarri and Mailman Road intersections with the Bruce Highway will be upgraded to improve safety
- wide centre line treatments will be installed, reducing the risk of head-on collisions through one-metre separation of oncoming traffic lanes.

Who is constructing the project? And where can I find out about jobs?

The Infrastructure Group (TIG) are designing and constructing the project on behalf of TMR. TIG is a joint venture between Bielby, BMD Constructions, JF Hull and Albem Pty Ltd.

TIG are responsible for engaging the people and businesses necessary to deliver the project. North Queensland people and businesses interested in being involved in delivering this major project are encouraged to contact TIG at:

- For civil works: Trevor Wilson (Superintendent) trevor.wilson@tigjv.com.au
- For structures: Joe Cocciolone (Superintendent) joe.cocciolone@tigjv.com.au
- For suppliers and subcontractors: Kevin Flanagan (Commercial Manager) kevin.flanagan@tigjv.com.au

For further information and to provide feedback

- ✉ PO Box 1089 Townsville QLD 4810
- ☎ 0408 972 536 / 1800 625 638
- 📧 haughton@tmr.qld.gov.au
- 🌐 www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Projects >search 'Haughton'

When did works commence, and how long will it take?

TMR commenced preliminary works as part of the \$514.3 million HRF project in late 2018. Major construction works as part of the project commenced in April 2019.

Given the extensive project scope, the HRF project is expected to be completed in mid-2021 (weather and construction conditions permitting).

Who is funding the project?

The HRF project is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments, under the Bruce Highway Upgrade Program.

This \$514.3 million project represents an Australian Government investment of up to the \$411.4 million and a Queensland Government investment of up to \$102.9 million.

Will the new Haughton River Bridge be wider?

Yes. Safety of the current 105 metre-long, 6.2-metre-wide Haughton River Bridge (originally constructed in the early 1960s) continues to be a major concern for the Burdekin community and Bruce Highway motorists.

Due to flood water regularly topping over the existing, low-level bridge and a significant amount of large debris regularly building up on the bridge after rain events, guard rails are not an option on the current bridge.

The lack of guard rails has contributed to community safety concerns, in addition to the narrowness of the bridge.

Once complete, the new Haughton River Bridge will be 146.5 metre-long, more than 10-metres-wide and include guard rails for safety.

The new Haughton River Bridge deck level will also be some two metres higher than the current bridge, reducing the impact of floodwaters and debris.



The existing, narrow Haughton River Bridge does not include rails which contributes to community safety concerns. The new, wider and higher Haughton River Bridge will also include rails to improve safety.

What is happening at the other bridges?

The existing Pink Lily Lagoon and Horseshoe Lagoon bridges will be replaced; and new crossings will be constructed over Healey's Lagoon and the Reed Beds curve.

The new bridges over Pink Lily Lagoon and Horseshoe Lagoon will be significantly longer, as well as higher, ensuring travel reliability into the future.

As part of HRF, new crossings of Healey's Lagoon and the Reed Beds curve will also be built. These structures will significantly reduce the likelihood of weather-related closures of this section of the Bruce Highway.

How will these bridge works improve weather-related highway closures?

Typically, flood waters force the closure of the Bruce Highway at the Haughton River Bridge every one to two years.

During the 2019 North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough, the Bruce Highway at the Haughton River was closed for a total of six days due to water and debris inundating the bridge. This was the longest recorded time of closure on this section of the Bruce Highway.

Once the HRF project is complete, the severity and frequency of weather-related highway closures will be greatly reduced. Improved flood resilience will be achieved through a combination of raising the highway; significantly increasing the number of culverts and bridges throughout the floodplain; and installing wider table drains.

Floodwaters from the Haughton River floodplain significantly impact nearby properties and the downstream community of Giru. This will need to be carefully managed during construction to ensure that current impacts are not exacerbated by the HRF project.

What is being done to improve safety?

Improving safety on this stretch of the Bruce Highway is one of the primary focuses of the HRF project.

Overpasses will be constructed at the Bruce Highway intersections with Upper Haughton / Hodel Roads and Shirbourne Road. These overpasses will eliminate interactions between Bruce Highway vehicles and trams using the nearby cane rail network.

WCLTs, which have been shown to significantly reduce the risk of head-on collisions by separating oncoming traffic lanes, will also be installed.

In addition, all Bruce Highway intersections throughout the project footprint will be upgraded to improve safety.

The rural roads which intersect the Bruce Highway, and which will be upgraded as part of the HRF project, are: Trembath, Bartlett, Woodstock Giru, Link, Piralko, Sarri and Mailman Roads.

Intersection upgrades include reconfiguration to improve visibility, installation of acceleration and deceleration lanes and slight relocation to improve conditions for motorists.

What impact will the works have on Bruce Highway motorists?

Managing roadworks in an already busy traffic environment, such as the Bruce Highway, is a challenge for TMR.

TMR and TIG are working on strategies to keep the highway fully operational during construction, particularly given that works will continue over consecutive wet weather and cane seasons.

Impacts on Bruce Highway traffic as a result of the HRF project should be minimal, particularly given that a large proportion of the project scope will be constructed offline.

Typically, construction will occur between 6am-6pm, Monday – Friday; and 6am-12noon on Saturdays.

During construction of the project, and to ensure the safety of workers, Bruce Highway traffic can expect:

- changed traffic conditions
- lane closures and/or short areas of contraflow traffic and
- speed reductions and minor travel delays.

Traffic controllers will be onsite to direct motorists, and VMS boards will be in place throughout construction to notify of changed traffic conditions.

TMR thanks the community for their patience and cooperation during these important works.

For real time information on road closures, traffic conditions and travel times through the HRF project construction zone, call 13 19 40, visit www.QLDTraffic.qld.gov.au or check the QLDTraffic app (download for free from the App Store or Google Play).

Wide load restrictions may be in place at times during construction of the HRF project.

Details of these restrictions are available on the Heavy Vehicle Conditions Database, available on TMR's website at www.tmr.qld.gov.au > *Business and industry* > *Heavy vehicles* > *Excess mass and dimension conditions*.



Highway traffic having to stop for cane trams will be a thing of the past, once highway overpasses are constructed at the Bruce Highway intersections with Upper Haughton / Hodel Road and Shirbourne Road

What impact will the works have on nearby homes?

Throughout construction of the HRF project, landholders along the project area can expect increased noise and vibration from machinery, equipment and work vehicles as well as nuisance dust from construction activities.

Given the construction works to occur as part of the HRF project there will be periods when nuisance noise and vibration cannot be avoided.

During pile driving activities for the new bridges, for example, there will be times of loud, repetitive striking (potentially causing noise and vibration in the surrounding area) while the bridge foundations are put in place.

The HRF construction program also means significant vehicle movements across the site. Surrounding businesses and residents may hear reversing warning signals as these vehicles move around the construction zone. Workplace health and safety regulations stipulate that these warning signals cannot be turned off, even in residential areas.

Access to some properties and businesses will be temporarily impacted during construction of the project and this will be discussed with those affected in advance of the activities occurring.

TMR and TIG both acknowledge that nuisance vibration, noise and dust generated by construction works are an inconvenience to nearby residents; and will attempt to minimise these impacts wherever possible.

For example, a water truck will wet down construction areas while works which generate dust occur, minimising the spread of dust into the surrounding environment and nearby homes.



Will the old bridges and roadway be removed as part of the project?

Considering the project's hydrologic modelling, TMR considered leaving the existing bridges in place, and also assessed duplicating the highway crossings (using either the existing bridges or new infrastructure).

These assessments found that any additional infrastructure would have a significant afflux impact on the floodplain, nearby residences and the downstream community of Giru.

As a result, the existing Haughton River, Pink Lily Lagoon and Horseshoe Lagoon bridges will be removed once construction is complete.

We will also remove the current Bruce Highway pavement once the new highway alignment is complete and open to traffic.

Will the Bruce Highway be duplicated, or have more overtaking lanes?

Bruce Highway traffic volumes in the area do not currently warrant duplication. Existing single-lane sections of the Bruce Highway in this area will remain single-lane.

The existing overtaking lanes north of Greenacres will be upgraded as part of the project though, to provide better conditions for motorists, by widening the pavement and installing wide centre line treatments.

No additional overtaking lane opportunities will be provided as part of the HRF project.

Additional overtaking lanes are being provided on the Bruce Highway north of the HRF project, as part of a separate project between Mailman Road and the Mackenzie Creek bridge (information below).

Community information

TMR is committed to listening to stakeholders and values all community feedback during the HRF project construction.

For more information on the project, please:

- email haughton@tmr.qld.gov.au
- call TIG's Communications and Engagement Coordinator Mary Balfour on 0408 972 536
- call TMR's Customer and Stakeholder Management Team on 1800 625 648 during business hours
- visit the TMR webpage, www.tmr.qld.gov.au and search 'Haughton'.

What other projects are happening nearby?

Immediately north of the HRF project, TMR is also currently delivering a package of Bruce Highway safety improvements at Palm Creek. The project, which commenced in mid-2019 and is expected to be completed in mid-2021, extends from Mailman Road to the Mackenzie Creek bridge (approx. 25km south of Townsville).

As part of the project:

- three new overtaking lanes will be constructed (one northbound, two southbound)
- WCLTs will be installed on 11km of the Bruce Highway pavement
- property accesses will be upgraded to improve safety and
- the Bruce Highway intersection with Cromarty Siding Road will be upgraded to improve sight distances and safety.



North of Townsville, TMR is also delivering a program of safety improvements on the Bruce Highway at Bluewater.

The project, which commenced in May 2019 and is expected to be completed in late-2020, extends from Deep Creek to Bluewater Creek (approx. 35km north of Townsville).

As part of the Bluewater project:

- a new, southbound overtaking lane will be constructed
- WCLTs will be installed
- three Bruce Highway intersections will be upgraded to improve safety, being the Forestry / Toolakea Beach Road, Feldt Street and Bluewater Drive intersections.

Motorists can expect further delays to travel between Ayr and Ingham while all three projects are under construction.