

## A message from the Regional Director



Welcome to the July 2008 edition of Main Roads Local Links – the Main Roads Cloncurry office's newsletter to the North West Region.

Last month the Minister for Main Roads, the Hon Warren Pitt, announced a record infrastructure investment for Queensland with the release of the new Roads Implementation Program 2008-09 to 2012-13.

This record investment includes \$214 million to be spent on road infrastructure projects in North West Queensland over the next five years, focussing on improving regional road networks to increase safety, capacity and reliability of roads in the north-west.

This funding will provide for continued upgrades to the region's key freight and passenger routes, including the Flinders Highway and Burke Developmental Road.

It will also provide for improvements to the region's unsealed road network to connect our regional and remote communities.

As you will see in our project updates section, a number of projects are currently underway in our region to improve safety and travelling conditions and access for remote communities through sealing regional roads and making improvements to bridges and culverts for improved wet season travel.

On another positive note, I would like to highlight the completion of the \$28 million Burke Developmental Road upgrade in late June. On 3 July Mrs Betty Kiernan MP, State Member for Mount Isa, officially commissioned the Burke Developmental Road, on behalf of the Honourable Warren Pitt MP, Minister for Main Roads.

The completion of this project ahead of schedule is an achievement I am extremely proud of and am pleased to see the positive impact this upgrade has had on the people of the north-west.

While we are upgrading these roads to provide safer travel for our communities, I would like to remind all road users of the importance of driving to the conditions when travelling on roads in the north-west.

I also encourage road users to take note of the advice provided on safety around roadworks, including the importance of driving to the road conditions and being aware of and obeying road work signage. In doing so, we all ensure the safety of our road workers and our road users as we look after this important community asset.

Finally, as we all take a reprieve from the summer heat, those who live in coastal or southern regions flock to the north-west to enjoy our mild winter days. We are now in the midst of tourist season and I would like to take this opportunity to remind people to exercise responsible use of rest areas. While we are working on making improvements to these areas it is also important that visitors exercise proper use so that the facilities can be enjoyed by all.

Peter Trim  
Regional Director  
Cloncurry District Office  
North West Region



## Main Roads Local Links



### Burke Developmental Road upgrade

Motorists travelling between Cloncurry and the Gulf of Carpentaria are benefiting from safer, improved travelling conditions following the recent completion of the \$28 million Burke Developmental Road upgrade.

State Member for Mount Isa Betty Kiernan MP officially commissioned the project on the 3 July, which involved widening 140km of narrow sealed road between Cloncurry and north of the Burke and Wills Junction, to provide an 8m two-lane road.

Mrs Kiernan said the state government's upgrade of this key regional road link had provided significant benefits for communities and boosted regional development.

"Previously, two-thirds of this 180km link was single-lane bitumen, only 3.6m wide.

"The completion of this project means the road from Cloncurry to north of the Burke and Wills Junction is now an 8m, two-lane road with sealed shoulders.

"The wider road will make it safer for all motorists — eliminating difficulties faced when overtaking on narrow bitumen, particularly when passing long freight vehicles.

"Narrow grids were also widened or removed and some sections re-aligned to improve visibility," Mrs Kiernan said.

Mrs Kiernan said the upgrade had improved safety, reduced freight costs by cutting travelling time and damage to stock, and improved quality of life for residents of the remote communities of Burketown and Doomadgee.

"Regional development will be boosted, particularly as this road is used to export cattle through the Port of Karumba, to move cattle to southern markets and

to central and southern fattening areas, and to move mining supplies to Century Mine.

"Transport operators who supply fuel, food and freight to

*Member for Mount Isa Betty Kiernan MP cuts the ribbon to officially commission the road. With Betty are, from left: Les Crossman (PD&D Main Roads), Peter Trim (Main Roads Regional Director), Andrew Daniels (Mayor Cloncurry Shire Council) and Fred Eames (Works Manager RoadTek).*

communities in the Gulf of Carpentaria and tourists who travel this road as part of the popular Gulf tourist circuit will also benefit from improved travelling conditions," Mrs Kiernan said.

Minister for Main Roads Warren Pitt said completion of the project ahead of time and under budget was an example of the State government's commitment to delivering roads that meet the needs of regional Queensland.

"Main Roads has done a fantastic job delivering this upgrade since construction commenced in February 2006," he said.

"Widening of 130km of narrow road between Cloncurry and the Burke and Wills Junction was completed in October 2007, \$3 million under budget and more than 12 months ahead of schedule.

"This is a great achievement and allowed for additional sections of the road to be widened north of the Burke and Wills Junction. Work on this final 12km section, which commenced in October 2007, was completed last month," Mr Pitt said.



*A road train travelling on the old narrow road.*

## Main Roads Local Links



*A newly widened section of the Burke Developmental Road.*

At the commissioning, Mrs Kiernan thanked Main Roads and RoadTek project staff for their efforts in delivering the latest project ahead of schedule.

“Motorists driving in the north-west now have an improved driving experience when travelling between Cloncurry and the Burke and Wills Junction. Main Roads should be acknowledged for their efforts in delivering this project,” she said.

Mr Pitt said the Burke Developmental Road was one of the many narrow sealed roads throughout outback Queensland, a legacy of the Beef Roads Scheme from 1960 to 1975.

“The Federal Government provided funding under this scheme to assist the grazing industry with faster transportation of stock, replacing droving with moving cattle by road freight, but when funding ceased it left Queensland with a difficult situation to manage,” he said.

“The State Government recognised the increasing demands on the Burke Developmental Road from the continued growth of the grazing, mining and tourism industries and sought to boost regional development through a major upgrade of this key regional road link.”

With the Burke Developmental Road widened south of the Burke and Wills Junction, the focus was now on eliminating narrow sections north of the Burke and Wills Junction, towards Normanton. The State Government has allocated \$2.9 million for a project due to start in August to widen a section of 260km north of Cloncurry at Donors Hill.



*Roadworks to widen the Burke Developmental Road from a narrow sealed road to 8 metres.*

## Project updates

### Gilbert River bridge progress

Construction of the new bridge over the Gilbert River, north of Normanton, is nearing completion.

This \$10 million project, which involves replacing the existing low-level bridge with a new high-level bridge and 2km of sealed approaches, recommenced in May this year.

Work is progressing well with the majority of the bridge work complete. Earthworks and pavement work for the approaches were carried out in June with final sealing of the approaches due to take place in August.



*Gilbert River bridge construction*

### Flinders Highway

Works are continuing on the progressive upgrade of the Flinders Highway between Cloncurry and east of Torrens Creek to improve safety and freight efficiency on this key east-west route.

A number of projects are currently underway:

- » Construction commenced in mid May on an \$8.8m project to reconstruct and widen a 12km section of the highway, 25km east of Hughenden in the Jardine Valley area. This project will widen the existing narrow section of highway to 8.5m with 9m sealed floodways and is scheduled for completion December 2008.
- » Construction also commenced in mid May on a project to widen a 9km section of the highway 20km west of Julia Creek. Work is progressing well on this project and is due to be completed in December 2008.

An additional project to rehabilitate and widen a 20km section of the highway between Richmond and Julia Creek is scheduled to commence later this year.

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### Upgrading the unsealed road network

#### Wills Developmental Road

Sealing of the Wills Developmental Road between Barkly Creek and Brookdale is progressing well since work commenced mid-May this year. This \$6 million project involves sealing a 12km section of the Gregory Downs to Burketown link and follows on from sealing a 9km section last year. Gravel works are currently taking place with one third of the gravel laid at the beginning of July. The project is due for completion in October 2008. Main Roads' commitment to providing Indigenous employment and training opportunities for the local community has continued with this project. On 18 June, Main Roads, RoadTek and the Mougibi Aboriginal Corporation signed an agreement for three trainees to work on the project.

#### Richmond – Winton Road

Work is progressing on sealing a 5km section of the Richmond-Winton Road. Contractors for the project, Richmond Shire, have completed gravel works on 2.5km with the remainder of gravel works and sealing to be completed in the coming months.

#### Aramac – Torrens Creek Road

The progressive sealing of the Aramac-Torrens Creek Road is continuing.

Sealing of a 10km section 117km north of Aramac is due to be completed in August this year.

Once completed, the second sealing project will commence, which will provide a further 20km of sealed road on this link between Aramac and Torrens Creek, east of Hughenden.

### Rest area improvements

Main Roads North West Region is working to address fatigue on rural roads in the north-west and is improving rest area facilities in the region as part of its fatigue management program.

In May 2008 Main Roads completed construction of a new rest area at Combo Waterhole, situated approximately 18km from Kynuna on the Landsborough Highway. The area features toilet facilities with disabled access, shelters with tables and chairs and a pullover area for vehicles.

Future rest area upgrades for 2008-09 include the construction of new facilities at the Burra Range on the Flinders Highway, between Torrens Creek and Pentland.

Main Roads will also be improving rest area signage along the major highways, to provide travellers with information on distances between rest areas and their locations.

The tourist season is now at its peak and tourists and travellers are asked to be mindful of acting responsibly at these rest areas to ensure they can be enjoyed by all.

The toilet facilities at these areas use water stored in attached tanks, which is delivered to the site when needed.

In these dry times visitors are urged to please take care to limit water use.

Visitors should also be mindful that dump points previously located at rest areas are being removed and placed at council owned caravan parks or at the entrance to the nearest town.

Proper use of these areas by all visitors is important to ensure the facilities stay in working condition and can be accessed and enjoyed by all motorists.



## Main Roads Local Links

### Safer road environments

Safety at roadworks is a high priority for Main Roads, as we deliver \$214 million of road projects in North Queensland over the next five years.

Here are a few important points you need to know about safety and roadworks.

#### How Main Roads is improving roadwork safety

Road users can expect to see improvements to roadwork signage making it clearer what is happening and why.

Main Roads is working closely with key stakeholders, including Queensland Police Service, local government and service providers, to ensure a consistent approach to safety around roadworks.

The department is working with other road and transport agencies to ensure an integrated approach to safety on roads and around roadworks.

#### Safety issues at roadworks

Roadworks are work sites and there are many issues to be aware of at roadworks that impact on the road user and road worker.

Road users may encounter:

- » road workers on site, heavy machinery and construction equipment in operation, reduced speed limits, narrower lane widths, access along side tracks (gravel or bitumen), incomplete line markings, road shoulders with steep drop-offs and loose stones and gravel that may damage vehicles.

Road workers may encounter:

- » speeding vehicles, drivers unaware of the need to drive to the changed road conditions, vehicles weaving in and out of work zones, road user aggression and drivers ignoring roadwork signage.

#### Roadwork signs are enforceable

Roadwork signage is there to ensure the safety of roadworkers and motorists. Roadwork signs are official signs and are enforceable. Disobeying these means:

- » roadworkers are at risk of serious injury
- » the driver is committing an offence, which can lead to fines and licence demerit points
- » the driver may be liable for damage caused to roadwork equipment and materials
- » the driver's insurance claim may be void
- » vehicles may be damaged by loose stones and gravel

**Remember:** Slow down around roadworks - it's your responsibility too.



### How can I stay safe around roadworks?

- » Slow down and keep to the reduced speed limit.
- » Keep an eye out for roadworkers.
- » Observe the roadwork signage. If you don't see someone working there, they may be out of view.
- » Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and other vehicles, traffic barriers, construction equipment and roadworkers



### Contact

For more information on Cloncurry and the north west:

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