

Barham Koondrook Bridge restoration work

November 2015

Answers to frequently asked community questions are provided below.

Why can't we have a new bridge and what would the cost be?

The existing Barham Koondrook Bridge must be retained for its heritage value. It is one of the oldest lift span bridges on the Murray River and is listed on the NSW State heritage register.

No planning has occurred to build a new bridge at Barham Koondrook and so no cost estimates are available.

Why can't we widen the existing bridge to make it two lanes?

The project scope for the restoration work is to replace 'like for like'. While widening the lift span would make more space for two vehicles to pass on the bridge, the design strength of the bridge is only sufficient to carry one B double truck at a time.

A new design for the whole bridge would need to be completed and then approved by the NSW Heritage Office. This process could take several years.

The current state of the bridge means the restoration work needs to happen now to ensure restrictions such as load limits do not have to be imposed.

Why do trees need to be removed to construct the temporary bridge crossing?

The preferred option, to build the temporary bridge at Thule Street next to the existing Barham Koondrook Bridge, has the least amount of trees to remove compared to five other options.

We are still assessing how many trees in total will need to be removed. Most of the tree removal will be on the Koondrook side to allow construction of the bridge and road approaches.

Removal and trimming of trees is also needed for the safe movement of large cranes on site.

We are working with Gannawarra Shire Council to get approval for the tree removal on the Victorian side.

When will the work site be tidied up?

Tidying up the work site is continuing.

The existing site compound on the NSW side will continue to be used during the next stages of restoration work, with the site compound on the Victorian side to be located next to the bridge and in the nearby road reserve.

We are working with Wakool Shire Council to update and replace the banner around the fencing.

Will the temporary bridge crossing take heavy vehicles?

Yes, the temporary bridge will take the same vehicle loads as the existing Barham Koondrook Bridge which is up to 62.5 tonne general mass limit B-doubles.

The width of the temporary bridge crossing will be narrower at 4.3 metres between kerbs (the existing bridge can take a wide load up to 4.8 metres). This will restrict wide loads like agricultural equipment.

We are consulting with the Wakool Landholders Association about how this impact can be lessened.

How will pedestrian safety be addressed on the existing Barham Koondrook Bridge?

We are investigating options to improve pedestrian access on the existing bridge.

A pedestrian walkway is included as part of the temporary bridge crossing.

Will the temporary bridge crossing have a give way sign or traffic lights?

It is intended to use a give way arrangement on the temporary bridge crossing. However, if the ability to see oncoming traffic is reduced and causes safety problems then traffic lights may be required.

Traffic movements over the temporary bridge crossing will be monitored and reviewed once in use.

How will Murray Street be affected by the temporary bridge crossing?

Murray Street may be affected in several ways. For the safety of motorists and pedestrians, turning movements at the intersection of Murray and Thule streets will be restricted during intersection construction work. Traffic will be detoured around Thule Street and signage will be in place to direct motorists to businesses.

During some construction activities such as crane lifting, turning movements at Murray Street on the western side may be restricted to again ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

If traffic lights are installed at the temporary bridge crossing they will need to be positioned at the intersection of Murray and Thule streets. This will mean turning movements at the intersection will be restricted to manage traffic flow safely.

At this stage we are planning for a give way arrangement on the temporary bridge crossing but traffic movements will need to be monitored and reviewed once in use.

What are the impacts from the temporary bridge crossing to river traffic?

The temporary bridge crossing will not include a lift span which will restrict tall river traffic, such as paddle steamers, having access under the bridge. The bridge clearance will be reduced by about 450 millimetres.

We are advising affected stakeholders such as the Port of Echuca and Paddle Boat News members of this impact to river traffic.

Why does it take so long to do the restoration work?

The timber truss work involves specialised carpentry that requires over 250 pieces of timber to be cut, dressed, shaped, drilled, planed, sanded and painted. This work is labour intensive and complex, compared with modern concrete and steel bridge maintenance work.

What it means however, is major maintenance on the bridge would not be needed again for about 25 years.

Timber is a natural material and regardless of the type of timber used, some pieces will rot quicker than others. But we expect most of the timber will last at least 25 years before it needs replacement again.

Will lighting be improved on the Barham Koondrook Bridge?

New street lighting will be installed as part of the restoration work. We are also investigating architectural lighting on the bridge trusses and towers to make the bridge visually interesting to look at night.

Will give way signage be improved on the Barham Koondrook Bridge? Should we have traffic lights instead?

A review of the current give way arrangements on the existing bridge will be included in the overall assessment of the narrow lift span and its impacts on pedestrian safety.

Is the \$2.3 million cost of the temporary bridge crossing wasteful?

An economic analysis was carried out to determine if the benefits of the temporary bridge crossing outweighed the costs. The analysis estimated \$6.8 million in travel time savings from no detour and no traffic control delays as well as the savings from vehicle operating costs. This means the benefit is almost three times greater than the cost.

Given this, and the significant safety benefits for workers and the ability to finish the work quicker, it has been determined that the proposal is viable and worthwhile to proceed with.

Why can't the temporary bridge crossing be left where it is after the restoration work is finished?

The temporary bridge crossing is built to be temporary, which means it is cheaper to build and maintain.

A bridge built to be permanent would be more expensive and require much more planning and environmental assessment, taking several years to complete.

The temporary bridge does not allow for tall boats to pass through which is another reason it is not

an acceptable option to leave it as a permanent crossing on the Murray River.

How much feedback was received and what are you doing with it?

We received over 100 surveys from the community, spoke to about 50 people in town over a day and a half, and engaged with 20 people at a community information night.

Overall the feedback was positive about the temporary bridge crossing. The issues and concerns raised are being addressed in the environmental assessment and the design of the temporary bridge and its road approaches.

Work on site is expected to start in early 2016 after environmental approval to proceed with the project has been received.