Bolivia Hill upgrade

Project update

Roads and Maritime Services | December 2019

The Australian and NSW governments are investing $80 million at Bolivia Hill to bring the New England Highway in line with a modern, efficient highway which is safer to drive and time-saving for the freight industry.

Roads and Maritime Services is delivering the upgrade of the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill, about 35 kilometres south of Tenterfield.

The project involves building 2.1 kilometres of new highway to improve road safety, freight efficiency and reliability of travel.

A new 320 metre cantilever bridge is being built to improve the road alignment through a steep section of the highway.

The upgrade will also deliver wider travel lanes and sealed road shoulders which will allow vehicles to pull over safely in an emergency.

Work completed to date

Slope stabilisation work was carried out on the eastern side of the highway earlier this year and included the removal of large granite boulders and the installation of a rock fall fence for the safety of motorists and workers.

Two concrete piers will support the 320 metre cantilever bridge that will be built over the valley on the western side of the existing highway.

Construction of the footings and ground anchors that secure and stabilise the bridge piers is complete.

The first pier, located at the southern end of the project, has been constructed. The pier head was poured during August and September and special formwork is now in place in preparation for bridge segments to be built.

Pier One located at the southern end of the project in the later stages of construction, with the pier head in the process of being poured. August 2019.
Current project activities

Excavation work to remove about 31,000 tonnes of rock from the eastern side of the highway is almost complete.

This work will provide enough width to build the new 3.5 metre travel lanes and wider road shoulders at the northern and southern approaches to the bridge.

When excavation of the eastern slope is complete, this section will be paved and traffic switched to this side of the road so the project team can carry out rehabilitation work on the western side.

The second pier is currently being constructed. As daytime temperatures increase, the team are completing concrete pours earlier in the morning to achieve the required thermal performance of the concrete.

At the top of Pier One, formwork for construction of the cantilever bridge segments is in place. To build the cantilever bridge, one segment will be constructed at a time from opposing sides of the pier.

This method of construction uses the weight of opposing segments to counterbalance the structure during construction and requires less supporting piers, which reduces the environmental footprint of the bridge.

Water for concrete production

Good quality water is needed to produce concrete for construction of the pier, pier head and bridge deck. In September, water quality testing was carried out on water from a private bore hole near the construction site.

Test results received in October confirmed compliance with the standards required for concrete production and the project team is now sourcing water from this location.

Whenever possible, including during any periods of rainfall, water is collected and reused on site to minimise usage.

Traffic arrangements

While excavation and road pavement construction work is continuing, traffic is reduced to one lane through the work area. Traffic lights are in place to manage the alternate flow traffic arrangement and motorists are advised to expect delays of up to 10 minutes.

For the safety of motorists and workers, CCTV cameras have been installed and are being monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by the traffic control team on-site to ensure compliance.

Widening work to prepare for construction of the northern approach to the 320 metre cantilever bridge.

Christmas closures

From Friday 20 December to Monday 6 January, work will stop on site, however the one lane traffic arrangement and 24/7 traffic monitoring will remain in place.

Holidaymakers travelling on the New England Highway between Tenterfield and Glen Innes are advised to allow additional travel time and expect delays of up to 10 minutes at Bolivia Hill.

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like more information about the Bolivia Hill upgrade please contact our project team:

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If you need help understanding this information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 1800 199 009.