

Grafton Bridge project update

August 2016

The NSW government is funding the additional crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton. This update outlines progress being made on the project and upcoming work.

Roads and Maritime Services is delivering this project, which involves building an additional bridge 70 metres downstream from the existing road and rail bridge. The project will also include upgrading parts of the road network in Grafton and South Grafton to connect the new bridge to the existing road network.

Welcoming a new contractor

Fulton Hogan has been identified as the preferred tenderer to design and build the new bridge. Fulton Hogan has more than 80 years' experience in the transport, water, energy, mining and land development infrastructure sector in New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific. Their recent projects include the Ipswich Motorway upgrade in Queensland and the Princes Highway upgrade in New South Wales.

Fulton Hogan is currently undertaking detail design and construction preparation activities under an early works agreement, with award of the final contract expected later this month. You should expect to see them on site in October, with major work due to start before the end of the year.

Recent activities

Updating the flood model

An updated flood model for the Clarence River, which incorporates the new bridge, has been developed. This was based on detailed survey work which was carried out in Grafton, South Grafton, Waterview Heights and Seelands earlier this year, along with updated river bed survey work upstream of the new bridge. Work to further reduce the impact is being carried out through refinements to the bridge pier design. This means less work will need to be carried out on the existing flood levees and to private homes, reducing the impact to the community while maintaining the current level of flood immunity. Work to re-level sections of the Grafton and South Grafton levee system is expected to start in November 2016.

Further information will be provided when the Flood Mitigation Report is published shortly.

Property acquisition

Property acquisition for the project is almost complete. The 27 private properties required for the project are now either owned by Roads and Maritime or contracts have been exchanged. The project team will work with the contractor and residents to determine timeframes and process for removing the buildings. A qualified property removal company will be engaged to carry out this work on behalf of our contractor.

Dust gauge installations

Dust gauges have recently been installed in a number of locations throughout the project area. These will be used to determine the baseline level of dust in the vicinity of the project before it starts. During construction these readings will be used as the reference point when checking dust levels.

Upcoming activities

Levee investigations

In August, geotechnical inspectors will conduct investigations of the levees at various locations throughout the levee system. These are being done to determine the structural integrity of the levees, ensure they are sound and understand what materials they are made of. When we have a better understanding of what materials are in the levees we can ensure we use the same, or similar, materials when releveling the low points as part of the flood mitigation program.

River surveys

We will be carrying out additional geotechnical investigations of the river bed in the near future. This will involve a drill on a barge sampling the material below the river bed at the site of the new bridge piers. This testing is being done to ensure the bedrock can support changes to the pier design.

Site preparations

We are expecting to start preparing the site compound in October. This will include site groundwork and utility relocation. This means residents will see major work beginning on the project before the end of the year.

Pre-cast yard

We will start establishing the pre-cast yard off Butters Lane, South Grafton in November. The pre-cast yard will manufacture 182 different sections of the bridge, with each section up to 2.5 metres in length.

What will happen once the new bridge is built?

The new bridge will ease congestion and reduce travel times for travel between Grafton and South Grafton and the Pacific Highway. Once the new bridge is opened the existing bridge will remain in its current form but with restrictions in place for heavy vehicles. This will mean heavy vehicles will no longer be able to use the current bridge. Both the old and new bridges will have one lane of traffic for travelling in each direction. The new bridge will be designed so an extra lane can be added when traffic volumes warrant an extension. Once completed it is expected that local traffic will continue to use the current bridge, while out of town traffic and heavy vehicles will use the new bridge.

For more information

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