

MEDIA STATEMENT

18 March 2021

Barron River Bridge update

Traffic control will remain in place on the 60-year old Barron River Bridge near Kuranda for at least six months while repairs are carried out.

Engineering investigations recommended continuing single lane operation and load limits while 1000 welds on the bridge are inspected and repaired where necessary.

These restrictions are required to ensure the safety of workers underneath the bridge and to safely manage the structure during the investigation stage.

While the maintenance is underway, the Queensland Government will start a \$2.1 million investigation into long-term solutions for either replacing or rehabilitating the ageing bridge.

Transport and Main Roads North Queensland Regional Director Sanjay Ram said the investigation will assess the best long-term solution to providing a safe, reliable crossing of the Barron River.

"We apologise for the ongoing inconvenience of those delays around the bridge but the safety of all road users is the absolute priority that guides our decisions on these matters," Mr Ram said.

Mr Ram said current traffic arrangements ensured the bridge was safe for all vehicles under 50.5 tonnes.

"In late October 2020, routine inspections identified fatigue in some steel elements," he said.

"These issues have been caused by the accumulated impacts of heavy vehicles crossing the river over many years.

"Heavy vehicles are now much heavier than they were in the early 1960s when the bridge was designed and built.

"Wear and tear like we've picked up is not unusual in steel bridges of this age and can be managed.

"Our bridge inspectors are continuing bridge investigations to make repairs.

"They're checking 1000 individual welds and repairing them as they go.

"To date, about 300 welds have been inspected, with around half of those identified for repair.

"The average delay through the site is about two minutes with the traffic management in place.

"We'd prefer we didn't have to reduce traffic over the bridge but that's not an option based on the work we need to complete, so we thank the community and the motorists who drive through this areas for their patience as we continue these repairs."

For up-to-date information on road works across the state, visit www.qldtraffic.qld.gov.au, call 13 19 40 or download the app.

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