

Community consultation report

Caboolture-Bribie Island Road Bribie Island Bridge planning

January–February 2023



Aerial view of the existing Bribie Island Bridge. Image source: TMR



Overview

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is undertaking a business case for a new bridge to Bribie Island and considering the future of the existing bridge. It aims to improve the safety and reliability of the connection between Bribie Island and the mainland.

The business case builds on previous studies. Technical investigations and community consultation are informing development of a proposed concept design.

Community engagement

TMR held community consultation from 16 January 2023 to 27 February 2023. Community feedback was received via a survey, online interactive map, email, phone calls and community information sessions. More than 3600 responses were received.



Consultation period
16 January to 27 February
2023 / more than 3600
responses received



Community drop-in sessions
Two at Bribie Island Shopping
Centre. One at Bongaree Jetty
450+ attendees in total



Letterbox drop
18,550 newsletters with
surveys delivered / 2798
reply paid surveys returned



Respondent location
75 per cent Bribie Island
24 per cent adjacent mainland
13 per cent unknown
2 per cent other areas



Online engagement
9745 TMR Have Your Say
webpage visitors / 576 online
surveys completed – 156 online
interactive map comments



Social media
Two geotargeted TMR
Facebook posts
6079 link clicks, 422 reactions,
498 comments, 87 shares



Email
More than 4600 sent
More than 100 received



Phone calls
16 incoming
25 outgoing.

Survey questions asked people to rate the level of importance of 10 issues including access to the mainland during incidents, congestion, safety, active transport, pelican perches, recreational activities, environmental sustainability and value for money. A summary of the statistical findings and key themes follows. The statistical results are included in Appendix A.

Congestion and safety

Statistical responses show that access to the mainland during incidents (crashes), improved safety on the bridge and approaches and improved congestion on trips to and from Bribie Island are extremely important to the majority of respondents. More than 85 per cent of survey respondents rated these issues as important or very important.

Feedback highlights the main concern is access by emergency services (particularly ambulances) to attend emergencies and transport patients, and delays or difficulties accessing health and medical services. Feedback included concerns for the health of an older population and difficulties experienced accessing family, work, education, recreation and community services. Personal and commercial impacts were referenced.

Congestion and safety issues include:

- increased traffic volume during holidays, weekends, weekday peaks and events due to growth of population, development, events, and visitor numbers
- existing bridge is a single access point, no alternative routes or passing opportunities
- existing bridge deck is narrow, comprising single traffic lanes with no separation between vehicles moving in opposite directions
- Bribie Island Road inconsistent lane configuration (two and four lanes) and speed limits
- local road network on Bribie Island (Benabrow Avenue/roundabouts) operational issues during peaks, insufficient capacity and lane merges perceived as unsafe
- access to Sylvan Beach Esplanade, Welsby Parade and Sandstone Point Hotel considered to contribute to congestion and safety issues
- narrow active transport path on the bridge is inadequate for bike riders, walkers and mobility devices and is also used for illegal fishing and jumping, with bike riders sometimes using traffic lanes
- driver behaviour including speeding, not giving way, overtaking, braking, tailgating and distraction looking at views
- pelican droppings obscuring vision.

Some respondents advised that mainland access during incidents, congestion and safety are not issues at all or they don't experience them, or they can manage these issues.

New bridge and existing bridge

Feedback indicated there is general support for provision of additional lanes through construction of a new bridge to improve congestion and safety and maintain access between the island and mainland. The benefits respondents referred to include improved traffic flow, access, health, safety, lifestyle, community connectivity, tourism and economic growth.

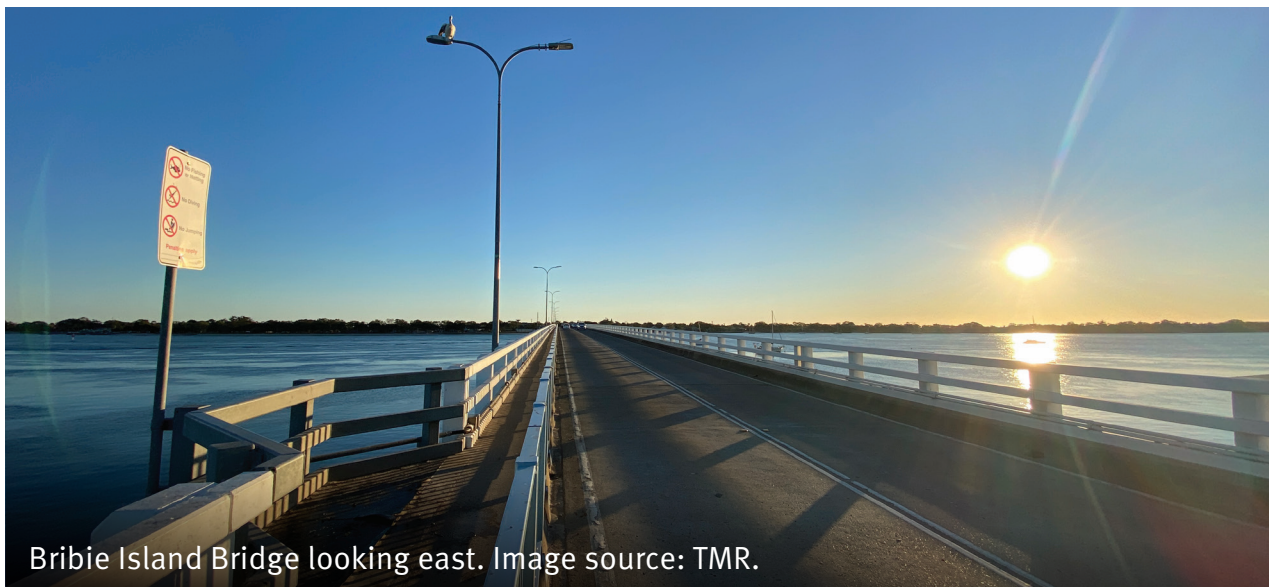
There are varying preferences for a new four-lane bridge or a new two-lane bridge, with a desire to maintain traffic flow and manage incidents by providing extra lanes and by moving traffic between lanes or bridges. There is general support for retaining the existing bridge either for traffic or for dedicated active transport facilities, with references to its iconic status and heritage character. There are some comments supporting additional recreational and placemaking activities on the existing bridge such as fishing, markets, cafes and park land.

There is some opposition to a new bridge, generally referencing potential traffic increases impacting the environment and lifestyle and the cost of a new bridge.

Some respondents prefer alternative upgrades such as building one lane dedicated to emergency access and/or active transport with no extra general traffic lanes. A different location for a new bridge was proposed by some respondents, generally further north between Toorbul/Donnybrook and Banksia Beach/White Patch.

Respondents supporting demolition of the existing bridge generally refer to cost effectiveness of decommissioning following construction of a new bridge and improved access for larger marine vessels.

Comments on timing were common, and generally express the view that construction of a new bridge, and adjacent road upgrades should have already been undertaken or should be progressed soon.



Bribie Island Bridge looking east. Image source: TMR.

Adjacent roads

Upgrades of adjacent local and state-controlled roads to improve congestion and safety are noted in both views that support and oppose a new bridge. Requests include:

- upgrading Bribie Island Road to provide four-lanes for the length of the road with consistent speed limits
- modifications to the accesses to Sandstone Point Hotel, Sylvan Beach Esplanade and Welsby Parade (improve access)
- upgrades to Benabrow Avenue, from the roundabout at Goodwin Drive to the roundabout at Eucalypt Street.

Active transport

Survey results show more than 85 per cent of respondents view separating active transport from traffic with a dedicated path for walkers and riders as very important or important. Active transport improvements were a key issue raised in feedback. Difficulties passing other users on the narrow bridge path was another key issue, resulting in people feeling concerned about or not using the path. Accessibility and inequality issues were raised for a range of path users, particularly for older and younger people and people with personal mobility devices. A wider path was generally requested to cater for walking, bike riding, scootering (traditional and electric), mobility devices and prams. Comments showed general support for improved active transport, separated from traffic, with many requests to retain the existing bridge for this purpose. There was also support for these facilities on a new two or four-lane bridge.

While separation of active transport and traffic was considered very important, support levels decreased in the survey responses assessing the level of importance for seating and shade, with 55 per cent of people considering these as important or very important. Feedback included some requests for separation between walkers and riders and provision of seating and shade, considering these as both safety and comfort features, particularly for older and younger path users. There were also references to safe crossing points at the bridge ends, with references to underpasses, and connections to paths on the island along with provision of an off-road active transport path along the length of Bribie Island Road. Feedback included improved active transport facilities, improving health, safety, wellbeing and lifestyle, supporting tourism and enabling other economic opportunities.

Costs

More than 75 per cent of survey responses considered a value for money solution to be either extremely important or important. Comments included costs being secondary to safety, quality and road functionality, the value of investing in a long-term solution to improve sustainability, achieving value for money by constructing a new bridge soon, higher costs for future construction and costs to community and economy if improvements are not made.

Costs were also referred to as prohibitive and unnecessary by those opposing a new bridge. Some respondents preferred the least costly option to be developed while others preferred costs not to factor into decisions.

Some comments discussed the use of tolls to pay for a new bridge. Note: it is Queensland Government policy not to apply tolls to roads where there are no alternative routes.

Environment and lifestyle

There are references in feedback to positive and negative lifestyle and environmental impacts by those who either support or oppose a new bridge. Environmental sustainability in the design, construction and operation of a new bridge was rated as either very important or important by 80 per cent of survey respondents.

Comments show there is a sense of, or aspiration for, a paradise island lifestyle that involves peace, quiet, leisure, recreation activities (holidays, fishing, boating, riding, walking, paddling, swimming, sightseeing, four-wheel driving, photography), respect for the environment (beaches, passage, ocean, wildlife, national parks) and a sense of community. There are also references to the island and surrounds as a place of work, commerce, education, shopping and community services.

New bridge opponents refer to potential increases in traffic, visitors and development impacting existing infrastructure such as parking, services, the environment, and peace and tranquillity. Supporters describe improvements to congestion, safety and active transport as improving lifestyle through better traffic flow, access, health, wellbeing and economic growth. Supporters want a new bridge developed with environmental protection in mind through the application of ecologically sustainable design principles. Some respondents consider environmental issues as secondary to bridge safety and functionality improvements.

Survey results show around 65 per cent of respondents consider provision of pelican perches on a new bridge to be important or very important. Feedback indicates pelicans are considered a special mascot species, described as iconic, welcoming people to the island and part of island life. There is some concern about road user safety in relation to pelican droppings and requests that perches are designed to hang over the water rather than bridge structures. There are also some comments concerned about attracting pelicans to an artificial environment.

Respondents asked for environmental impacts to be minimised through design including limiting the project footprint and considering opportunities for environmental improvements. Respondents asked for construction and operational impacts such as noise to be minimised.



Paddle boarder on Pumicestone Passage. Image source: TMR.

Cultural heritage and economy

Respondents asked for cultural heritage matters to be considered in project development. Bribie Island Bridge is seen as iconic and historical, part of the area's cultural heritage, along with the area's environmental assets and recreational activities. Requests were made to retain the bridge and consider education, arts and cultural opportunities.

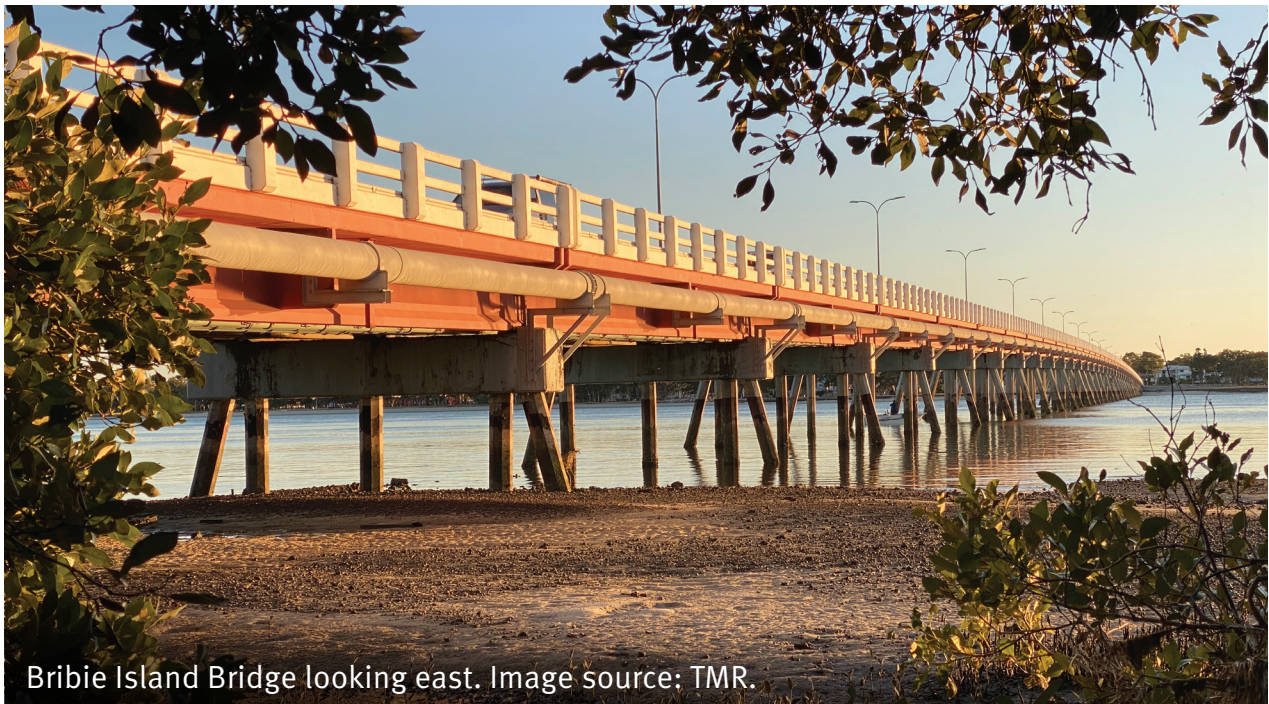
Feedback on Aboriginal cultural heritage included requests to engage with indigenous custodians and careful management of possible artefact areas. Education and cultural opportunities were raised such as ceremonies, art, signage and bridge naming. Requests were made for inclusivity with consideration of Indigenous, older and younger stakeholders and future generations.

Supporters of a new bridge consider existing conditions as impacting economic progress and a new bridge to be important for economic growth through improved, reliable traffic access and better active transport conditions. Comments include improvements for existing and possible new tourism related businesses.

Bridge design and views

Comments on bridge design aesthetics were provided in some responses, with references to complementing the historical character of the existing bridge, enhancing the natural environment and views of the area and providing a welcoming entrance to Bribie Island. The bridge/s are considered an important part of the visual experience of the area, providing a backdrop for activities in the area. Consideration was requested for how a new bridge complements the existing bridge and how features such as barriers, fencing, lighting (including feature lighting) and finishes are presented.

Views from the bridge and mainland were also raised in feedback. There were references to retaining views of the marine environment and surrounding terrestrial areas, with specific references to Pumicestone Passage and the hinterland mountains. There were also requests to improve driver behaviour and safety by removing views from traffic lanes. The impacts on views due to the deck height of a new bridge was included in comments. Opportunities to provide viewing areas and entry statement landscaping and signage were also raised.



Bribie Island Bridge looking east. Image source: TMR.

Recreation

Around 50 per cent of survey responses rated consideration of recreational activities such as fishing and boating as being either important or very important. Recreational activities described included sight-seeing, walking, riding, boating, swimming, paddling and holidaying. Fishing was described as a popular recreational activity under and on the bridge, as part of the area's lifestyle for residents and visitors.

However, responses generally described fishing from the existing bridge as a cause of frustration and concern for path users, traffic and watercraft. Fishing was described as hazardous and messy, with some calls for monitoring and enforcement to stop illegal bridge fishing. Feedback indicated an interest in providing safer fishing opportunities and facilities.

There were some requests for increased deck height to enable larger or masted vessels to go under the bridge. Removal of the middle section of the existing bridge with construction of a new four-lane bridge was generally raised by supporters of increased bridge height.

Consultation

Comments on consultation ranged from appreciation for the opportunity to provide feedback and calls for continued engagement to concerns about the cost and time involved in engagement.

Appendix A – survey statistics

	Extremely important	Important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not important	No response
1. How important to you is improved access to the mainland during incidents (crashes)?	78.10%	11.50%	4.28%	2.75%	2.75%	0.62%
2. How important to you is improved safety on the bridge and approaches?	76.23%	15.41%	4.23%	1.52%	2.08%	0.53%
3. How important to you is improved congestion on your trips to and from Bribie Island?	67.13%	21.78%	5.98%	2.26%	2.32%	0.53%
4. How important to you are improved facilities for pedestrians, bike riders and mobility scooters.	51.33%	28.69%	11.74%	3.88%	3.62%	0.74%
5. How important to you is separating bike riders from traffic lanes with a separate path?	64.25%	24.18%	6.32%	1.90%	2.75%	0.60%
6. How important to you are pedestrian rest areas with seating and shade provided at key locations?	26.25%	28.99%	24.84%	8.16%	11.11%	0.65%
7. How important is consideration of recreational activities (fishing/boating) in the area around the bridge?	24.89%	26.58%	25.40%	8.33%	13.73%	1.07%
8. How important to you is the provision of pelican perches on the new bridge?	39.00%	25.01%	16.00%	6.29%	12.93%	0.77%
9. How important is environmental sustainability in the design, construction and operation of a new bridge?	52.43%	27.80%	11.41%	3.55%	3.89%	0.92%
10. How important to you is a value for money solution?	44.69%	31.77%	13.42%	2.93%	5.70%	1.49%

