

Coffs Harbour bypass



Australian Government



White Booyong Fig

The Australian and NSW governments are funding the \$2.2 billion, 14-kilometre Coffs Harbour bypass project. The bypass will boost the regional economy and improve connectivity, road transport efficiency and safety for all motorists.

Once complete, the Coffs Harbour bypass will save motorists more than 12 minutes in travel time, bypass up to 12 sets of traffic lights and remove about 12,000 vehicles a day from the centre of town, making Coffs Harbour an even better place to live, work and visit.

The project's Construction Environmental Management Plan was approved in March 2023 enabling major construction to start. Current work includes:

- Installing sediment basins and erosion controls
- Installing Panama disease management control measures
- Vegetation removal along the project boundary.

Controlled blasting for cuts starting soon

As part of earthwork activities, the project team will start controlled blasting at various locations along the bypass alignment in coming months.

Controlled blasting for open cuts will take about a year to complete, weather permitting. Construction of the three tunnels will start later this year and will involve controlled blasting for about 18 months to complete, weather permitting.

Controlled blasting helps us quickly excavate hard rock to make way for the new road. Using controlled blasting over conventional hammering and ripping techniques allows us to complete the work more efficiently and with less impact to nearby residents.

We expect to excavate about two million cubic metres of rock using controlled blasting. Most of this rock will be used to build up or “fill” parts of the road that run through lower-lying areas.

Blasts are completed by drilling into the ground and placing explosives in a set pattern and depth according to each location’s specific blast plan. The blast is let off in a sequence making an explosion that looks like a Mexican wave.

Depending on the size of the blast site, drilling may take several days to complete, and this activity can be quite noisy. The actual blast is over quickly and the noise can be compared with a loud clap of thunder.

For blasting, work will take place during standard construction hours. Specifically, for cut blasting it will be:

- **9am to 5pm Monday to Friday inclusive**
- **9am to 1pm on Saturdays**

For tunnel blasting, it will be:

- **7am to 6pm Monday to Friday inclusive**
- **9am to 1pm on Saturdays**

We intentionally stage our blasts to minimise impacts for community. For cut sites, we aim for two blasts a week in a single location.

The project team is currently investigating the use of a surface mining machine instead of controlled blasting in some locations along the alignment. The surface miner cuts, crushes and loads rock in a single operation for improved efficiency. This will be considered on the balance of safety, environment, community and efficiency outcomes.

This means we will schedule smaller blasts, across different locations, more often. For tunnel sites, we aim for two a day in any single location.

We will work with nearby residents to provide information on expected impacts and mitigations, and have offered all properties within 500 metres of a blast site the opportunity to receive a property condition report prior to the work starting.

The Minister’s Conditions of Approval (MCoA) for the project sets strict limits on vibration and air blast overpressure (noise from energy) and all blasts are modelled and monitored to ensure compliance. Data from the monitoring will be publicly available online each month.

The safety of workers and the community is our highest priority when undertaking controlled blasting activities. All blasts are managed by a licensed contractor and experienced shotfirer who will:

- prepare the blast design and sequence
- manage regulatory approvals
- ensure the site is clear before detonation
- investigate any misfires
- undertake monitoring
- clear the site for other construction activities to continue

We may need to stop traffic briefly for blasts that take place near a road and motorists may experience up to a five-minute delay in these locations. We will communicate these changes on our website, Facebook, via roadside electronic messaging signs and directly with nearby residents.

Once each controlled blast has taken place, the rock will be crushed on site and relocated to our fill sites using trucks. We are using internal haul roads where possible. However, initially we will need to use local roads at times. We will avoid hauling on bus routes and during peak traffic periods where possible. Specific notifications will be distributed to impacted residents and stakeholders about nearby controlled blasting scheduled and these will also be made available online.



Controlled blasting at a cut site

White Booyong Fig Subtropical Rainforest saved

In response to community feedback, design refinements have been made to the Coffs Harbour bypass alignment and 100 per cent of the White Booyong Fig Subtropical Rainforest (Grandpa's scrub) will be saved.

More than five times the required offsets for White Booyong Fig (Grandpa's Scrub) Rainforest are being protected. These offsets include the Coffs Basin adjacent to the alignment and Upper Kalang.

Design refinements to the alignment include moving the carriageways closer together in this section of the new highway and moving the Mackays Road underpass north away from the rainforest.

The possibility of expanding the rainforest downstream along areas of Treefern Creek, is being investigated. This could result in tripling the size of the remnant rainforest. The community will be updated once this is finalised.

The Korora Nature Reserve and the White Booyong Fig Subtropical Rainforest (Grandpa's Scrub) will not be impacted by construction and vegetation will not be removed from these sites.

Vegetation removal and landscape and habitat restoration

Vegetation and banana tree removal has started along the alignment and is being carried out in multiple locations at once. Removal is estimated to be complete by August 2023, enabling earthworks and drainage to start.

The project team is committed to reducing the amount of vegetation to be removed across the alignment and all threatened flora species have been translocated in accordance with approved management plans.



Nest box installation

The project has approval to remove 48.17 hectares of native vegetation, but we have already reduced this footprint by 20 per cent to about 38 hectares of native vegetation.

Roughly 300 hectares of natural habitat will be protected through biodiversity offsets. We have also contributed more than \$270,000 to NSW Biodiversity Conservation division for research into the management of Myrtle Rust and its impacts on the Scrub Turpentine species.

Extensive landscaping and revegetation work covering about 150 hectares, at this stage, will be carried out as part of the project. Details will be included in the Place Design and Landscape Plan which the project team will place on public display later this year for feedback.

Transport for NSW will restore koala habitat and connectivity at several locations, including over the Roberts Hill and Gatelys Road tunnels and under the bypass at Jordans Creek. Through the project's dedicated koala revegetation work, we will be restoring eight hectares of previously cleared agricultural land as koala habitat. This work will reconnect bushland from the escarpment to the low-lying areas of Coffs Harbour, creating a significant fauna corridor.

For more information read our factsheets at www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au.

Managing Panama Disease

As part of major construction work, the project team is implementing strict measures to minimise the risk of spreading Panama disease, which affects banana plantations.

Panama disease (also known as Banana fusarium wilt) is caused by a soil-borne fungus. While not harmful to humans, it can be fatal to a range of banana varieties and has a significant impact on fruit production.

To help you understand more about Panama disease and our approach to managing it during construction, read our factsheet online.



Construction has started on Panama disease wash-down facilities

Aboriginal cultural ceremony for main site compound

On Friday 31 March, a smoking ceremony (Juumgundi Gurrijigam) was held at the Coffs Harbour bypass compound site in North Boambee Valley.

The smoking ceremony was conducted by Matthew Flanders from Gumbaynggirr Creative and was done to cleanse the area and ward off any potential bad spirits. The buildings on site were also cleansed as part of the ceremony.

Matthew said various chants in Gumbaynggirr language during the smoking to ward off any bad spirits and to introduce the new compound and people to the old spirits and country.

Gumbaynggirr elder Uncle Reg Craig did the welcome to country and Jalay Jalay Dance Troupe group performed a number of dances as part of the ceremony.



Matthew Flanders doing the smoking ceremony at the site compound

Place, design and landscape plan update

The Coffs Harbour bypass project's Place Design and Landscape Plan is being developed and will be placed on public display for feedback later this year.

This plan will outline the project's proposed landscaping and revegetation as well as providing high-level information about Gumbaynggirr storyline art which is expected to feature on structures including noise walls and the Luke Bowen Footbridge.

Traffic update

Long-term temporary speed reductions will be implemented on the Pacific Highway for construction of the Coffs Harbour bypass. These speed reductions for road works will be between the Sawtell interchange and the Englands Road/Stadium Drive roundabout and between Bruxner Park Road to Campbell Close.

In early May, the speed on the Pacific Highway south was reduced to 60km/h due to the shortening of an acceleration lane. Changes to the speed limit on the Pacific Highway north are expected to be implemented later in 2023.

Reduced speed limits for road work are implemented for the safety of the construction workforce and motorists. Motorists should keep to speed limits and follow the direction of traffic controllers and signs.

For the latest traffic updates, you can call **132 701**, visit **livetraffic.com** or download the Live Traffic NSW App.

Throughout construction, the project will use monitoring technology to advise drivers of their speed in work zones. We will be working with Transport for NSW and NSW Police to ensure the ongoing safety of the community, motorists and our workforce.

The Coffs Harbour Bypass team is committed to minimising traffic movements on local roads to reduce impacts on community. Some measures we are implementing include:

- No right turn out of West Korora Road onto the Pacific Highway for construction vehicles
- No right turn into or out of Campbell Close at the intersection with the Pacific Highway for construction vehicles
- No use of the Pacific Highway u-turn bay north between James Small Drive and Opal Boulevard for construction vehicles
- No construction heavy vehicles on North Boambee Road during school pick up and drop off times.

Additionally, the project will install a canteen at the main construction compound site on North Boambee Road to minimise light vehicle movements by workforce to purchase meals and refreshments.

Asbestos management is underway

During construction activities, the Coffs Harbour bypass team will manage asbestos-containing material (ACM) at several locations within the project boundary. It is relatively common to find ACM during major infrastructure projects.

Finding asbestos during major construction is often the result of previous illegal dumping, landfilling and poor management practices, previous demolition or construction or when the team is demolishing existing buildings.

The ACM must be removed and relocated safely for major construction activities to continue. This work will continue throughout this year.

All ACM work will be carried out in line with the relevant legislation, SafeWork NSW codes of practice and the Transport for NSW (TfNSW) Asbestos Management Plan. A hygienist is always onsite when this work is carried out.

Some of the ACM will be removed and safely transported to a licensed waste facility. The

remaining ACM will be relocated and buried under the new road corridor. This is determined based on suitability requirements, including the nature of the contamination, size and scale, and whether other contaminants are present.

Burying the ACM within the project boundary improves safety and environmental outcomes by minimising transportation and reducing the space occupied in licensed waste facilities. Under the road corridor, the ACM is in a known, secure, and approved location where it is less likely to become disturbed in the future.

The safety of the community and our workforce is our highest priority during ACM work and there are strict measures in place to minimise risks and reduce potential harm.

For more information, read our Asbestos Management factsheet at www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au.

Upcoming construction including out of hours work

South

- Traffic barrier placement and vegetation removal on the Pacific Highway between Sawtell interchange and the Stadium Drive/Englands Road interchange and on Englands Road and between Sapphire Beach interchange and Bruxner Park Road in June
- Vegetation removal along Englands Road, near the intersection with the Pacific Highway continuing in June

North

- Vegetation removal along the western side of the Pacific Highway and Korora School Road near Kororo Public School, this may include extended hours on Saturdays in July
- Under-boring and installing pipes from the eastern side of the Pacific Highway at James Small to the western side of the Pacific Highway, south of Bruxner Park Road will be carried out from May to September
- Project generator will be in use at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Bruxner Park Road until September

- Periodical semi trailer deliveries to working areas at Charlesworth Bay Road, James Small Drive, Bruxner Park Road, West Korora Road and Mackays Road
- Trenching and under-boring on the western side of the Pacific Highway between Old Coast Road and Bruxner Park Road ongoing for about three months
- Relocating utilities along the Berry Access Track, off Old Coast Road ongoing for two months
- Barrier removal along the Pacific Highway near Charlesworth Bay Drive and Old Coast Road in June
- Road work at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Campbell Close in August

Alignment wide

- Refuelling and plant and machinery maintenance along the alignment is ongoing
- Earthworks along the alignment, which may include extended hours on Saturdays is ongoing

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Night work for vegetation removal

Contact us

If you have any enquiries or complaints, please contact the project team on **1800 550 621** or **community@chbteam.com.au**.



1800 550 621



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**www.pacifichighway.nsw.gov.au/
coffsharbourbypass**



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