

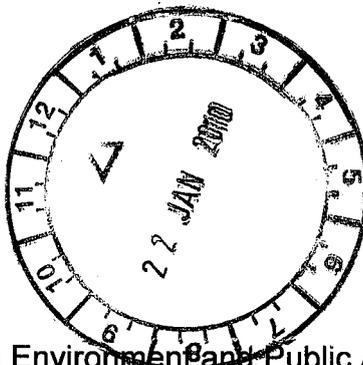


PUBLIC

Minister for Transport; Disability Services

Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC

Our Ref : 29-10620



20 JAN 2010

Hon B Ellis, MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Ellis

Thank you for your letter of 19 November 2009 following an approach from Mr Paul Owens concerning the poor condition of the Boorara Road Bridge and petitioning for its replacement.

The structure of concern to Mr Owens is Bridge 3915 on Boorara Road over the Gardner River in the Shire of Manjimup. The bridge, a two span timber structure, is owned by the Shire.

In 2008 Main Roads carried out a detailed inspection and load rating of Bridge 3915. It was identified during this inspection that many abutment piles and sheeting, outside stringers and deck planks were in poor condition. Consequently, Council was given the option of carrying out the necessary repairs, accepting a four tonne load limit or restricting the bridge to a single central lane.

The Shire of Manjimup decided against repairing the bridge as it was in such a poor condition that this was not considered a feasible option. It was also considered that a four tonne load limit could not be sustained as the bridge was regularly used by milk tankers and similar heavy vehicles. Accordingly, the Shire of Manjimup decided to restrict the bridge to one lane and installed false kerbing to channel traffic to the single centre lane. In addition, Council arranged for the erection of a 'Give Way' sign on the north western approach (Northcliffe) to minimise conflict with vehicles travelling in opposite directions trying to cross the bridge at the same time. All signage including advance warning signs, width markers and guide posts were installed and reviewed and approved by Main Roads in August 2008.

Main Roads considered culvert replacement but decided against this based on advice from the Shire regarding the level of service required. A culvert would not be able to accommodate the required river flows and provides a repository for debris. With this in mind, Main Roads arranged for a Design Options Report to be prepared in June 2009. This report recommended replacing the current structure with a single span bridge of similar waterways capacity as the existing one.

I am advised that in 2010/11 \$120 000 of funding has been allocated in the Local Government Bridge Program to provide for preconstruction works necessary for the new bridge. These activities include preparation of a detailed waterways report and design, survey, geotechnical Aboriginal heritage and environmental assessments. Once completed the proposed project to replace the Boorara Road Bridge can be thoroughly scoped and a reasonably accurate cost estimated prepared. As you would appreciate, such preparations are essential in order for the proposed bridge replacement to be considered for funding in future Local Government Bridge Programs.

Further to the above, in recognition of the importance of this bridge to the local community, funding allocated in 2010/11 has been advanced and Main Roads is preparing to undertake preconstruction activities as detailed above in order to ensure replacement works can commence with minimal delay once construction funding is identified. However, it needs to be recognised that the earliest that funds for the replacement of the Boorara Road Bridge are likely to be made available under the Local Government Program is 2012/13. Preliminary estimates indicate the proposed project will cost in the region of \$700 000.

I trust the information provided will assist the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. O'Brien', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon Simon O'Brien, MLC
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT