

Swan River Crossings Project

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Swan River Crossings project?

We are replacing the Fremantle Traffic Bridge.

The new Fremantle Traffic Bridge will continue to provide two lanes in each direction for road users, with new paths on both sides of the bridge offering more room for people riding and walking.

Why does the traffic bridge need to be replaced?

The bridge needs to be replaced.

The bridge has a high level of corrosion and rot in the structure and is at risk of not being able to sustain the impact of being hit by a large vessel.

Since the bridge was opened in 1939 Main Roads has undertaken extensive maintenance and repairs, and many elements have been replaced with steel and concrete. However further repairs will require new key structures.

More information is available in our Bridge Condition fact sheet [here](#).

What stage is the project at now (November 2023)?

We are now exploring building the new traffic bridge at the existing location, with improved cycling and pedestrian paths over the river.

This option will tie in to the existing road network to the north and south.

The advantages of building within the existing location include reducing the construction footprint, reducing impacts to the surrounding road network and limestone escarpment and maintaining the location (and heritage) of the crossing at which the first of four bridges was built in 1866.

The construction of the rail bridge and the PSP from North Fremantle Station to the river has been deferred and will not be built as part of the revised scope.

Will the new bridge be an entry statement into Fremantle?

Urban design is a key element of the project team's work and the revised scope provides for the option of an innovative bridge designs to be explored.

Why did the scope change?

A preferred concept released in August 2022 (Canning Highway Realignment) was not supported by the community due to the significant impact of changes to the road network and the limestone escarpment on the southern river bank.

In addition, preliminary cost estimates to build the preferred concept far exceeded the funding available for the project.

In response, and in consideration of the work underway to shift container trade to Kwinana as part of the Westport business case, the rail bridge component of the project has been deferred.

Can you build a bridge to the west (between the bridges)?

Investigations have concluded that building any bridge to the west would require the Canning Highway/ Queen Victoria Street intersection to be grade separated, with Canning Highway travelling under the new bridge and impacting the escarpment on the south.

Cycling and pedestrian paths

Will the new traffic bridge have paths for cyclists and walkers?

Yes. People walking and cycling will have new and improved paths on both sides of the new bridge when the project is complete.

How wide are the new paths compared to the existing one?

The current path is shared by all walkers and riders and is a sub-standard 1.7m wide.

However, the new traffic bridge will include paths up to 4 metres wide on both sides of the bridge.

What about a PSP from North Fremantle Station to the river?

The construction of the PSP from North Fremantle Station to the river has been deferred.

The PSP from North Fremantle Station to the river was to be constructed in conjunction with the rail bridge, as it was located mainly in the rail reserve, and hence has now also been deferred.

Heritage

Is the Fremantle Traffic Bridge heritage listed?

Yes. We are continuing to engage with the Heritage Council of WA to ensure heritage values are respectfully integrated within the Project's urban design.

How is the heritage value of the bridge being considered?

Heritage values are a key consideration for the project team - the location and various iterations of crossings, the current heritage-listed bridge and the local history of crossings dating back thousands of years.

This will be the fifth bridge built at this location, highlighting the significance of the crossing point itself.

Will you retain a remnant portion of the current bridge?

At this stage, the team will need to undertake further investigations around retaining remnant piles in the river.

Will you re-use the timber or remnants from the current bridge?

We have already been approached by organisations keen to re-use or obtain parts of the bridge as it is demolished. Where possible we will use remnant parts and relics of the old bridge in urban landscaping opportunities and design, subject to the condition of the timber.

More information will be provided as we progress.

Will the colourful container bow need to be moved?

No – the options being explored will retain the artwork in its current location.

What will happen to the Ferry Capstan?

The options being explored will allow for the Ferry Capstan base to stay in its current location.

How is the project considering Aboriginal culture?

We are working closely with Whadjuk Nyoongar Elders.

The Project's Whadjuk Elders' Advisory Group told us how piers in the water disrupt this sacred flow. Reducing the number of piers in the water minimises disruption.

We will be identifying opportunities to acknowledge the rich cultural history of Walyalup through artwork, placemaking and landscaping features.

Construction

When will construction begin?

Construction is expected to begin in the second half of 2024.'

How long will the old bridge be closed to traffic?

While development work is still ongoing, we expect the new design to result in a significantly shorter closure time for the old bridge than previous designs. It is expected that the old bridge will need to be closed for approximately 12 months.

How long will construction take?

A detailed construction timeframe will be confirmed following detailed design, however it is expected to take approximately 3 years.

Environment

Will the demolition and construction impact the local environment and the Swan River?

Main Roads is working through a range of processes and undertaking planning to ensure environmental impacts during the demolition of the bridge and construction are minimised. This includes close liaison with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

Has climate change and potential sea level rise been considered?

Yes. Main Roads has a climate change and adaptation guideline that all projects and works near coastal areas consider in the planning, design and construction phases.

In line with this, the project will design for a 300mm sea level rise for roads, and a 900mm sea level rise for bridges.

Bridges require 900mm to control changes in navigation clearance requirements as the sea rises.

How are we managing the dolphins in the river during construction?

A trained Marine Mammal Observer (MMO) will be present during pile driving activities which will be stopped immediately if a marine animal is sighted within or close to the shut-down zone.