Main Roads is continuing a project to upgrade the Bussell Highway between Vasse and Margaret River. This project overview provides an update on the project progress.

Why is the upgrade needed?
Bussell Highway forms the main route servicing the coastal strip between Bunbury and Augusta. The growing population, continued popularity of the recreational areas of the south west and steady increases in personal and commercial travel have generated additional transport demands.

More than 4000 vehicles per day use the existing two-lane road between Busselton and Margaret River, which significantly increases during summer and holiday periods. The overall crash rate for this stretch of road is above the south west and state averages, however, the severe crash rate is around 50% above the state average for rural highways and main roads.

Improvements completed
In the last few years, several key intersections have been improved. To reduce crash numbers, the section of road north and immediately south of Cowaramup has been widened and five passing lanes added using Safer Roads Funding. The graphs show the impact of improvement works - for example, graph 2 shows a greater than 50% reduction in crashes.

Graph 1 shows the statistics for a section where no work has been undertaken, and crash rates remain unchanged over the same period.

Work completed has included:
- The construction of intersections, overtaking lanes and road widening at locations between Vasse and Margaret River.
- Main Roads is paying particular attention to maintaining and preserving vegetation in the road reserve corridor. Corridors have been reserved and roadside areas are being planted and established prior to removing existing vegetation that will be affected by the roadworks. Clearing of the existing highway is being limited to one side of the highway as much as possible.

Note: crash numbers are rolling five year totals.
Upcoming works

There are two stages remaining:
1) Bussell Highway: Bramley Forest Section; and
2) Bussell Highway: Vasse – Island Brook.

1) Bussell Highway: Bramley Forest Section
The vegetation in the Bramley Forest is environmentally significant on the western side, but vegetation on the eastern side is predominantly a disused plantation. Main Roads has undertaken extensive environmental investigations and consultation with environmental groups to ensure existing environmentally significant vegetation is retained.

The two images on this page provide a view of what the road environment looks like before and after construction (a larger image is available to the community via email if required by contacting Carolyn Walker at icwalker@vianet.net.au).

At Bramley Forest, seed has been collected and in Autumn 2012, infill planting will be undertaken with local species, including 40 karri trees.

Timing
All studies and environmental approvals are complete and parliamentary approval is being sought to acquire the land required for the road improvements. Funding has been identified in Main Roads’ four year plan.
PROPOSED ROAD RESERVE WIDENED TO 50m

NOTE: EXISTING VEGETATION TO BE MAINTAINED UNTIL VEGETATION IS ESTABLISHED BEHIND

LEGEND:
- EXISTING HIGHWAY
- COMPLETED OVERTAKING LANE
- COMPLETED WORKS
- DEVELOPMENT STAGE
- DEVELOPMENT STAGE OVERTAKING LANE
- FUTURE WORKS
- FUTURE WORKS OVERTAKING LANE

TYPICAL WIDENING CROSS-SECTION

NEW LH
EXIST LH

MARGARET RIVER

MARGARET RIVER BRIDGE
END OF PROJECT

BUSSELL HIGHWAY
VASSE TO MARGARET RIVER PROJECT
PROPOSED UPGRADE STRATEGY

Dwg No. 201102-0078.dwg
LAST UPDATE: 10/2/2011
NOT TO SCALE
2) Bussell Highway: Vasse

The initial focus on the Carbunup townsite to Island Brook link of the Bussell Highway has been on discussions with landowners about property impacts. These discussions are continuing, and Main Roads expects to have a detailed design completed by 30 June 2011.

In late 2011 and early 2012, the project will focus on Carbunup to Vasse. Main Roads plans to meet with landowners and undertake design.

The planned construction programme is (note: subject to funding):

Summer 2011/12: Chambers Road to Island Brook:
- Improvements to Yelverton Road and Hairpin Rd intersections;
- Lowering crest to north of Yelverton Road by 4m to improve safety.

2012/2013: Carbunup River to Chambers Road:
- Two overtaking lanes;
- Improvement to the Chambers Road and Lennox Road intersections;
- Realignment of curves to increase safety.

2013/14: Carbunup to Vasse.

Project benefits

Enhancing the safety and efficiency of this key regional route is the major benefit in upgrading the existing highway. There are several other benefits, including:

- Improving access, protection and sight distances for vehicles entering and leaving the mainstream traffic through key intersection upgrades.
- Reducing both travel times for motorists and transport costs.
- Enhancing industrial, agricultural and tourism opportunities for the South West Region by improving access to the Vasse Margaret River area.
- A revegetation program that will provide greater and long-term benefits for the region to address the short-term environmental impacts caused by vegetation clearing.

Community involvement

A Community Liaison Committee of local representatives helped Main Roads progressed the plans for the improvements. The Committee has met both prior to and after phases of development and provided valuable input into proposed designs and coordination of construction work. As a result, the completed works have been implemented in line with the group’s recommendations.

Main Roads thanks community representatives for their involvement in this important regional project, and will initiate discussion and consultation for the works planned in the Vasse section.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Main Roads welcomes queries from the community about this project. If you would like further information, please contact:
Carolyn Walker
Community Relations Consultant
Phone: (08) 9450 1445
Email: icwalker@vianet.net.au