

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

APRIL 2022

## PRINCES HIGHWAY EAST UPGRADE

### Works are progressing on the Princes Highway East Upgrade

**It's been a busy summer on the Princes Highway East Upgrade with major works underway between Traralgon to Sale.**

In recent months, we have commenced bulk earthworks on all sites and completed significant drainage works at Fergusons Gully and Sandy Creek in Flynn. We're currently preparing to switch highway traffic to access the newly constructed sections of highway in Kilmany, Kilmany East and Flynn by mid this year, weather permitting.

When the project is complete, the upgrade will make journeys between Traralgon and Sale quicker and safer by increasing road capacity and providing a consistent two-lane highway in both directions.

#### **New Kilmany bus turn around area**

As part of the project, the school bus stop in Kilmany will be relocated from its current location on the side of the highway to a much safer location next to the Kilmany Public Hall.

We'll also construct a new bus turn around area to accommodate the new bus stop. Soil samples and other investigations have been undertaken and we're currently in the process of planning earthworks for the turnaround area.

Consultation has been undertaken with the local Kilmany Hall Committee regarding the final design and fencing arrangements.

While the new bus turn around area will require the removal of some vegetation, the majority of trees along the hall boundary fencing will be retained. We expect to commence this project in April 2022, and expect it to be completed by June 2022.

*Image (above): Aerial image of the Princes Highway East Upgrade in Kilmany East*



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# What we're doing

## Flynn

We're continuing our hard work behind the safety barriers to build the new highway lanes.

We've completed our bulk earthworks and are now constructing the new pavement for the two new lanes. We'll commence installation of new safety barriers and public lighting in autumn this year.

At the end of April you will be directed onto the newly built highway lanes, providing a smother journey for road users. By redirecting traffic onto the new section of road, workers will have more space to safely reconstruct the existing highway.

Drainage works have been completed in Ferguson's Gully and Sandy Creek. Stormwater drainage will continue throughout the project area.

## Kilmany

We've completed the establishment of our site compound including our Solar Pergola which is a sustainability initiative that allows the site to be off the electricity grid.

We have completed vegetation removal and continue major earthworks to form the foundations of the new highway lanes and rail bridge. We're also installing new drainage at Nambrok Creek and near the Sale-Toongabbie Road intersection.

Temporary fencing will soon be put in place to allow workers to start the construction of the new rail bridge. Once bridge works are completed offline, we'll slide the new bridge into place causing minimal disruption to the train services and road users.

We're continuing works on stormwater drains and relocating utility services. A 70km reduced speed limit has been implemented along the alignment after hours to keep road users and the local community safe.

## Kilmany East

We've made significant progress constructing the west-bound lanes of the Princes Highway, between Velore and Sale-Cowwarr roads.

We're planning to seal the newly constructed highway lanes in April, and expect the works to be complete by May.

In May we'll implement a traffic switch, diverting all traffic onto the highway lanes, which will allow our project team to safely begin reconstructing the existing section of Princes Highway, creating a safer and faster travel experience for all road users.

During these critical activities there may be changed driving conditions such as reduced speed limits, and delays of up to five minutes.

*Image (below): Aerial image of the ongoing works to build the new rail bridge in Kilmany.*

*Image (right): Aerial image of the Princes Highway East Upgrade in Kilmany.*



## Sensitive design

We understand and share the value on local flora and fauna by the community. With all major projects, we sensitively balance our impact on the environment with the need to improve road safety and journey reliability.

Our team of experts are exploring all possibilities to retain as many trees as we can. Our aim is to minimise our impact on local vegetation.

We're doing this by:

- only working in areas required for the project
- only removing vegetation where it is unavoidable
- fencing off vegetation to be protected as 'no-go zones'
- performing onsite inspections to ensure any trees and vegetation that need to be removed are first inspected by a qualified environmental specialist to determine if there are any animals or other features that may have specific requirements

- pruning trees to prevent impact from construction activities using qualified arborists
- working with local councils and local groups to re-use and collect seeds for future propagation.

Native vegetation that cannot be retained will be offset at a 30-hectare roadside vegetation offset site between Sheepwash Creek, Traralgon East, and Flynns Creek Road along the south side of the Princes Highway and a 140-hectare site in Bengworden. The Department of Transport is the custodian of this site.



Upgrade to drainage at Sandy Creek in Flynn



## Landscaping

We've finalised the landscaping and urban design plans for all three sections of the project. The designs include a mix of indigenous and native trees, shrubs and grasses to be planted along the highway in Flynn and Kilmany, including:

- Black Wattle
- Blackwood
- Yellow Box
- Swamp Gums
- Forest Red Gum
- Hedge Wattle
- Varnish Wattle
- Sticky Hop-bush
- Woolly Tea-tree
- Kangaroo Apple
- Tree Violet
- Swamp Paperback
- River Swamp Wallaby-grass
- Tall Rush
- Weeping Grass
- Red Fruited Saw-sedge

Approximately 150,000 plants will be planted as a part of the whole third stage of the Princes Highway East Upgrade.

### Meet the project team

## Craig Hooper

*Health Safety and Environment Manager, Kilmany East section of the upgrade*

Meet Craig Hooper, Health Safety and Environment Manager working on the Kilmany East section of the upgrade. Craig's role on the project encompasses the important functions of health, safety and worker wellbeing. He is also responsible for environmental controls, sustainability and the 'Recycled First' policy implementation.

His key objectives are to ensure that everyone gets home safely at the end of day whilst protecting the environmental value of the land we occupy.

Craig has worked across a number of sectors, with key strengths in the Emergency Response and Management Sector. He utilises these highly transferable skills and drives a preventative approach to risk management on the Princes Highway Upgrade.



When we asked Craig what excites him about being part of the project he said, 'it allows me to work close to home in a community that I have close links with. Working with a medium-sized up-and-coming Gippsland-based company allows me to take on challenges and celebrate success with committed and genuine people'.

As a community responder for Ambulance Victoria based out of the Rosedale Branch, Craig is aware of the impact that road trauma can have on the community. He is confident that the project will deliver enhanced safety design for local road systems, ultimately reducing the impacts of road-related incidents and creating a safer travel experience for all road users once complete.

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