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# Bridge set for two lanes again

MOTORISTS are set to rejoice with the reopening of the second lane on the Barron River Bridge.

But it will come at a cost. The troubled bridge has been down to one lane since February 2020 with motorists enduring long waits to cross after the Department of Transport and Main Roads imposed a load limit of 50.5 tonnes.

The limit was applied due to safety concerns to do with the structure, however Member for Barron River Craig Crawford said essential repairs had been done.

There has been widespread criticism over the closure and its inconvenience to commuters. The reopening though will come with a trade-off — speed limits. A TROUBLED bridge, that has caused months of disruption and has been operating as a single lane for almost a year, is set to reopen to two lanes of traffic later next week.

On October 27 at 6am the Barron River Bridge near Kuranda will reopen to two lanes.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads imposed a load limit of 50.5 tonnes in February 2020 and regulated traffic to a single lane from November.

The bridge was reduced to one lane after safety concerns.

Member for Barron River Craig Crawford said the essential repairs had been done.

"I am pleased to advise we were able to repair all the fatigue cracks that were identified during the inspections," Mr Crawford said.

Earlier this year there were camera and sensors installed to measure the bridge under different traffic loads.

"From this data, we know the bridge is performing well and can be reopened to two lanes of traffic," Mr Crawford said.

While the lanes are finally reopening, commuters and businesses have endured disruption on the route.

Mareeba businesses expressed their concerns earlier in the year over the inability to make a decision over whether the bridge should stay or go.

They said they could not handle the delay for much longer.

Disruptions on the highway had also been slammed in the past by Queensland LNP leader David Crisafulli and Kennedy MP Bob Katter.

There are still expected to be control measures including speed limits and changes for pedestrians.

The 50.5 tonne load limit will remain and there will be a 60kmh speed limit.

"This means the 80kmh section that starts near Rainforestation will also become 60kmh," Mr Crawford said.

"The lower speed limit will not only help to keep the bridge safe, but will also help to reduce the risk of cassowary strikes at this location.

"The 60kmh speed limit will end about halfway between the bridge and the intersection of Rob Veivers Drive and Myola Road."

Other changes will include switching pedestrian access to the other side to distribute the heavier westbound loads more centrally.

"Trucks that travel up the Kuranda Range usually carry a heavier load than trucks that travel down," Mr Crawford said.

A \$2.1m project to investigate future options has started.

"We are also investigating a long-term solution for the ageing bridge," Mr Crawford said.

The project is expected to be completed by late 2022.

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