

Kirwans Bridge Load Reduction

Frequently asked questions

Strathbogie Shire Council has made a tough decision to reduce the load limit on Kirwans Bridge from six to three tonne.

It was a decision made to ensure the safety of all those using the bridge after we found significant maintenance works were needed.

We know this won't come as a surprise to many.

Kirwans Bridge was opened in 1890. It has a uniquely angled and exceptionally long timber deck with the occasional passing bays.

It's similar in form to the original Barwon Heads Bridge and it is equally the longest timber road bridge in Victoria.

The load limit analysis has found the bridge is not competent supporting typical CFA firefighting type vehicles without significant upgrades.

In a bridge of this age the crossbeams and long decking are constructed of smaller elements than the ones used for the 10-tonne and 15-tonne timber bridges of today.

At Kirwans Bridge the long decking and crossbeams would need to be replaced with larger size beams as well as more bracing installed to the girders in order to seriously increase the load limit.

We estimate this cost would be in excess of \$3,000,000.

Why is it necessary to reduce the load limit now?

It's a tough decision, but one we're making to ensure your safety. A recent inspection of the bridge has found it in poor condition and there

are several maintenance items that need our attention.

Reducing the current six-tonne load limit to three-tonne and maintain the 20 km/h speed limit will continue to preserve the integrity of the bridge.

Does this mean anything above that weight must travel around the western side of Lake Nagambie?

Yes, this means vehicles above three-tonne will need to cross the Goulburn River by travelling along Vickers, Nagambie-Rushworth, Weir, Reedy Lake and Kettles roads.

This includes delivery trucks, combinations of vehicles, caravans etc along with the CFA trucks that will be required to take the alternative road route.

Ready Lake and Weir roads are gravel. Will they be sealed?

Yes, it is our intention to seal these two roads for a smoother travel experience as soon as we can secure government road funding.

What about ambulances? They are not as heavy as the CFA trucks.

Ambulances under flashing lights will still be able to traverse Kirwans Bridge.

Why can't the responsible authority repair the bridge?

There are a couple of reasons:

It's really expensive. It's estimated it would cost in excess of \$3,000,000 to upgrade the bridge to a 10-15 tonne capacity. To put this in some perspective this is 30 per cent of Council's

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capital works budget, which was \$10.005 million in 2020/21.

We don't want to make decisions without our community. Working together will mean we're making better decisions.

Will the community at Kirwans Bridge have input into any changes to the bridge use?

Absolutely! We will soon be calling on interested members of the community to join a community panel to decide the best future use of the bridge.

We understand it's important and we want to work with those affected to broaden our thinking and ensure we're solving problems together. If you're interested email info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au and we'll let you know when we call for Expressions of Interest.

Taking the alternate route to Nagambie will take extra time.

We appreciate that taking this alternative route that adds about 5.7km to travel to the centre of Nagambie could be classed as tiresome, but this action has been taken in the spirit of the bridge and community safety.

When does the new limit commence?

The changes will commence on the 31 March 2021 in which all signage, including advance warning, shall be updated to advise travellers of the changed road/bridge conditions.

Who can I contact to discuss these new requirements?

Phone our Manager of Asset Planning Uwe Paffrath on 1800 065 993 or email info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au.

