

Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Local Government

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Mr Mark Shelton MP
Member for Lyons

12 JUN 2025

C/- Laura.Ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Shelton

In Parliament on 29 May, you asked the following question on behalf of a constituent:

Waddamana Bridge, also known as the Bashan Road Bridge or Ouse Bridge, was the suspension bridge constructed approximately 90 years ago as part of the hydroelectric scheme and connected small areas such as Miena and the Shannon to Ouse and Osterley. It is owned by the Central Highlands Council and maintained by State Growth. Due to the loss of tension in the suspension cables in the north-eastern side of the bridge, it sadly collapsed in March 2024 and was impassable to any vehicles and has now been removed. Constituents are having to cross the river via the existing ford, which becomes dangerous in the winter months and rainy events.

What discussions have been had for the replacement of the bridge and is there a completion date I can advise to my constituents?

Thank you for the question.

The Ouse River suspension bridge located on Bashan Road at Waddamana was a steel truss and cable-stay structure constructed in 1934.

The bridge was declared to be maintained and renewed by the State Government under the Local Government (Highways) Order 1994, largely due to the bridge being an ageing suspension bridge requiring special expertise to manage and maintain.

The bridge was load limited to 4 tonnes to mitigate the risk of failure due to the structure type (cable-stayed bridge) and the age of the structure. While the bridge had appeared to be in good condition, it collapsed in late March 2024 due to the failure of the north-western backstay cable beneath ground level.

Bashan Road is part of the Central Highlands Council (Council) road network and services the local farming community, forestry operations (operating under permit) as well as oversize/overmass vehicle movements to and from the Cattle Hill Windfarm. While there is no traffic count on the bridge or road, Council indicates the traffic volumes are extremely low.

Engineering consultants have progressed the design work for a replacement bridge including undertaking a natural values assessment, site surveys, and geotechnical investigations.

The design has been completed to concept level and the preferred option is a new 68 metre structure on the same alignment as the original Ouse River Suspension Bridge.

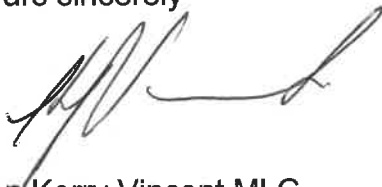
The Department of State Growth, Council and engineering consultants have jointly prepared documentation for grant funding under the Australian Government's Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program (SLRIP). An application for funding was made by Council (as the asset owner) for a design and construct project under tranche 2 of the program which closed on 31 January 2025.

The initial natural values assessment identified two threatened plant species protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC) are likely to be present on site. These species flower later in the year, so further surveys were conducted in early January 2025 to determine the presence/extent on site. Current advice from consultants is the presence of these species on site can be managed with no referral through the EPBC required.

As per the SLRIP guidelines, evaluation and announcement of successful SLRIP tranche 2 applications was expected approximately 10-12 weeks from the closing date (approximately end of April 2025), however decisions have been delayed with no formal reason provided, with announcements now not expected until late June/early July 2025.

Thank you for the question and I trust this information will be of assistance to your constituent.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Vincent', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon Kerry Vincent MLC
Minister for Infrastructure