

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Council tours \$40m commitment to regional road infrastructure**

Roper Gulf Regional Council Elected Members and Executive staff have been given a first-hand look at the progress of the project that will improve wet season access to the remote communities of Ngukurr and Numbulwar.

Following the Ngukurr Local Authority Meeting on May 17, the Council accepted an offer from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL), and project contractor Sitzler, to inspect the new high-level bridges spanning the Roper and Wilton rivers.

The \$40 million project is a joint undertaking between the Federal and Northern Territory Governments, with works scheduled to be completed by the 2017 wet season.

In addition to the bridges, the project includes sealing 7.3 kilometres of the Roper Highway, which provides the only vehicular access to two of the largest communities in the Council's Local Government Area.

The existing river crossings are impassable for between 80 and 150 days each wet season, and Chief Executive Officer Michael Berto said the new bridges would provide multiple benefits for the region.

"Council has more than 1800 residents living in Ngukurr and Numbulwar, with another 100 in nearby Urapunga, so it was essential that the only road to those communities was upgraded to a standard that improved wet season access," he said following the tour.

"Ngukurr and Numbulwar are two of the fastest-growing communities in the Roper Gulf region, and this new infrastructure complements Council's \$2.31m Growth Centre Transport and Freight Hub Project.

"Improving heavy vehicle access will open up economic and social development opportunities in both centres, so I commend the NT and Federal Governments for committing to constructing two new bridges to help facilitate that."

Despite the recent wet season delaying the project, DIPL Regional Director of Infrastructure for the Katherine region Phil Harris said substantial progress had been made since work recommenced in April.

“Although the extended wet season has resulted in lengthy delays for the contractor to return to site, significant progress on the bridges has been noticeable since Easter,” he said.

“The Wilton River Bridge is now complete, with road works under way to finalise and seal the approaches.

“The placement of deck concrete commenced on the Roper River Bridge last week, and although road works have not commenced at this bridge, it is envisaged that both bridges will be opened before the onset of the next wet season.”

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