



Transport for NSW

# McKanes Bridge Upgrade

Project Update | June 2022

The NSW Government is investing \$10 million to upgrade McKanes Bridge over Coxs River on McKanes Falls Road at South Bowenfels to ensure the bridge can meet the current and future safe operational needs of the road network.

The NSW Government is funding this project to upgrade McKanes Bridge over Coxs River at South Bowenfels is nearing completion. This project started in May 2020 and aims to replace the existing bridge with a safer, stronger and more reliable bridge. Despite some major setbacks due to wet weather and Covid-19, we are on track to completing this important bridge upgrade, to provide a safer, stronger and more reliable bridge.

McKanes Bridge was built in 1893 and is a McDonald timber truss bridge - one of only four remaining in NSW! This project will not only enable safer and more reliable crossings of the Coxs River but will also ensure the conservation of the oldest surviving example of a McDonald truss bridge in NSW for years to come.

Now that the project team has assembled the four new timber trusses and removed the temporary bridge deck, construction of the new stress-laminated timber (SLT) deck is in progress. The deck has to be constructed on site in its final location on the bridge, rather than

pre-assembled and then craned in. This is especially challenging as the timber needs to be kept as dry as possible during assembly to maintain moisture content - our crew has to cover and uncover each working day in case of rain, frost or dew.

## What's next?

When the new deck has been constructed, it will be secured onto the cross-girders that connect up all four trusses. The final part of the works will be asphaltting, installing the new steel traffic safety barriers and guardrail on the approaches on either end of the bridge, then finally, linemarking.

The McKanes Bridge is expected to be open to traffic by September 2022, weather permitting. Transport for NSW is sincerely grateful for the patience and ongoing cooperation of residents and the South Bowenfels community while we complete this important project.



McKanes Falls Bridge, pictured here in 1950, is a key feature in the heritage landscape of the Lithgow area



Construction on McKanes Bridge in February 2022

## Did you know?

- McKanes Bridge is 54.8m long.
- Each timber truss weighs around 20 tonnes!
- The bridge's previous drab colour scheme was applied during WWII to prevent it standing out vividly from the air. Upon completion, McKanes Bridge will be restored back to it's original gloss white paint with contrasting black metal features.

## What are the other McDonald timber truss bridges in NSW?

1. Crankies Plains Bridge over the Coolumbooka River in Bombala
2. Galston Bridge over Tunks Creek in Galston Gorge
3. Junction Bridge over the Tumut River in Tumut

## What about the microbats?

In May 2021 whilst working on the project TfNSW workers made a surprising discovery: a colony of endangered southern myotis microbats. Work stopped immediately to enable WIRES and a specialist ecologist to establish the extent of the colony and ensure the bats were safe. When the bridge upgrade is completed, purpose-made bat habitat boxes installed during the project will be relocated to allow the bats to remain in the area.



One of the microbats that was discovered and relocated during the project



## Thank you from our Bridge Works Manager Tim Stone

"I've been a part of the McKanes Bridge project since planning for the upgrade began in 2014. I've been involved in bridge construction and maintenance for 30 years, and I love working on these heritage-significant timber truss bridges because it keeps the skills alive that the original bridge builders and carpenters developed and refined well over a century ago! A huge thanks from me goes out to the community for their continued support while we work on this project. We can't wait to reopen McKanes Bridge to traffic towards the end of the year."

## Where can I find more information about the project?

 1800 167 499

 [western.projects@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:western.projects@transport.nsw.gov.au)

 [nswroads.work/mckanesbridge](https://nswroads.work/mckanesbridge)



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